



HGC Stewardship and Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document

June 2026



hemelgardencommunities.co.uk



Hemel
Garden
Communities

| Version | Date | Version Name | Prepared by |
|----------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1.0 | 08/01/2026 | Consultation Draft | HGC Team |
| 2.0 | 21/05/2026 | Committee Draft | HGC Team |
| 3.0 | 12/06/2026 | Version for Adoption | HGC Team |

Contents

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| Foreword | 2 | 4 Delivery | 33 |
| Executive Summary | 3 | 4.1 Implementing the Preferred Delivery Model | 33 |
| 1 Introduction | 5 | 4.2 Implementing an Alternative Delivery Model | 33 |
| 1.1 What is the Hemel Garden Communities Programme? | 5 | 4.3 Additional Delivery Considerations | 33 |
| 1.2 Using this document | 6 | 4.4 Implementing Major Development Sites | 34 |
| 1.2 Using this document, continued | 7 | 4.5 Applicant Steps | 35 |
| 1.3 Policy & Guidance Context | 10 | 5 Monitoring and Review | 36 |
| 1.4 What does good Stewardship and Placemaking look like? | 15 | 6 Further Guidance and Engagement | 37 |
| 2 Vision | 16 | Glossary | 38 |
| 2.1 HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD Objectives | 17 | Appendix 1 - Stewardship Statement Template | 40 |
| 3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy | 18 | Appendix 2: Stewardship Hub Model Frequently Asked Questions | 46 |
| 3.1 Approach | 18 | Image Credits | 47 |
| 3.2 Stewardship and Placemaking Core Standards | 19 | | |
| 3.3 Governance | 22 | | |
| 3.4 Funding And Resources | 25 | | |
| 3.5 Options Analysis | 29 | | |
| 3.6 Preferred Delivery Model | 31 | | |

Foreword

Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) has an ambitious vision to create vibrant new neighbourhoods and communities, while supporting the continued transformation of Hemel Hempstead. Delivering this long-term vision across the HGC Programme Area begins with establishing robust guidance which aligns with the HGC Spatial Vision, its core pillars and themes, and the principles set out in the HGC Charter.

From the outset, we have recognised that successful, resilient communities rely on effective long-term stewardship. This supplementary guidance has been developed to work across the HGC Programme Area, and potentially beyond. Its purpose is simple: to ensure that future communities benefit from a consistent, well-managed and financially sustainable approach to stewardship, placemaking and community development.

We are grateful to the councillors, landowners/developers, stakeholders and residents, who have helped shape this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) through workshops, consultations, and surveys. In particular, we would like to thank the community organisations, from across Hemel Hempstead and St Albans, who have met with us and provided advice and feedback. Their contributions have been invaluable.

Our key partners, Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), St Albans City and District Council (SADC), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), Hertfordshire Futures and Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ), should also be acknowledged for their continued support and collaboration, as should Homes England.

As planning applications come forward, this guidance will provide a clear framework for Applicants to demonstrate how long-term stewardship responsibilities will be met. In doing so, it will support the creation of thriving, well-managed and sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, where people feel connected, engaged and invested.



Bob Lane

Bob Lane OBE

Independent Chair, Hemel Garden Communities Delivery Board



Figure 1 : Transformed Neighbourhood Centre (Illustrative only)

Executive Summary

Introduction

Hemel Garden Communities is an ambitious, strategic growth programme which will transform and grow Hemel Hempstead, creating attractive, new and sustainable neighbourhoods to its north and east by 2050. The programme provides a unique opportunity to create an exceptional place for residents to call home, as well as to support the regeneration of the existing town, and preserve its legacy as one of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's original 'New Towns'. The HGC Programme Area covers the town of Hemel Hempstead, within the borough of Dacorum, as well as the proposed Growth Areas, straddling both DBC and SADC to the north and east of the town and wider movement routes beyond. Around 20,000 new homes will be delivered across the HGC Programme Area with up to 11,000 in the Growth Areas and a further 9,350 across the town, including opportunity areas, strategic sites and other DBC Local Plan allocations and windfall development (Figure 3). In addition, there will be extensive commercial areas, new infrastructure and assets.

Making sure that new communities integrate with those that are already established is key to the successful growth of Hemel Hempstead. It is also essential that any assets and infrastructure created can be used and enjoyed by all and are well-maintained and managed for generations to come. As required in the SADC Local Plan to 2041 and the DBC Local Plan to 2041, a clear stewardship strategy is therefore needed, and the Stewardship and Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the guidance to achieve this for the whole of the HGC Programme Area. This ensures an equitable approach throughout the town, so that development sites are aligned in their approach to stewardship and placemaking, creating a strong sense of community and the foundation to deliver transformation supported by sustainable investment, into the future.

Approach

Through wide-ranging consultation with key partners and stakeholders, it has been established that a single over-arching model, with an umbrella stewardship body governance structure, is the most effective way to deliver stewardship and placemaking across the Programme Area. The HGC Stewardship Hub, a not-for-profit charitable organisation developed by industry experts Community Stewardship Solutions and Greenbelt, is identified as the preferred delivery model to take this forward. The Hub takes ownership of public open space and community assets on a development (through freehold, long lease, or licence) following housing completion.

The HGC Stewardship Hub model responds to concerns raised about estate management companies in the Competition and Markets Authority Report (2024), by prioritising placemaking through the development of active and engaged communities who have a meaningful role in decision-making. It also promotes strong and transparent governance, alongside a sustainable funding model incorporating sinking fund provision from the outset. The Stewardship Hub will be responsible for the long-term management and operation of public open space and community assets for sites above 75 dwellings across the HGC Programme Area.

The spatial scope of the SPD extends across the entire HGC Programme Area, encompassing the existing town and designated Growth Areas, including windfall sites. Sites of 75 dwellings and above are expected to engage and participate in the preferred delivery model, the HGC Stewardship Hub. Smaller sites under 75 dwellings should contact the HGC Stewardship Hub for consideration, and are encouraged to consider a stewardship approach that broadly aligns with the core standards set out in Section 3. Due to economies of scale, the opportunity may exist in the future, to further grow the reach of the preferred delivery model, the HGC Stewardship Hub, more widely across the SADC District and DBC Borough for large sites over 75 dwellings.

The HGC Stewardship Hub will initially be set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee, progressing to charitable status within a couple of years. The role of the Hub is to manage public open space and qualifying community assets (excluding adopted highways, schools and strategic utilities) and provide ring-fenced finances for each site. Community assets will include a variety of formal and informal public open spaces, including community gardens, food growing areas, multifunctional green assets, sports pitches and associated facilities and infrastructure, as well as community buildings. The Hub will manage income generation from community facilities and income generating assets provided by the developers. Quoted figures, set out in this document, related to the mixed income and charging framework are estimated at this stage and are as a result of findings from a high-level Business Case, which was developed to support this SPD. Further refinement is expected with details being confirmed once the HGC Hub reaches the Business Plan and set-up stage.

Managing agents for each site will be appointed using an accountable and transparent Hub procurement framework. The managing agent will have a commercial focus and operate day-to-day estate management and maintenance and collect the service charge on behalf of the Hub. The service charge will be benchmarked with comparable sites across the wider area to ensure it is affordable and acceptable for residents. There will be some variation in charges between sites, reflecting the differing infrastructure each supports, both on-site and beyond (including facilities such as sports pitches, parks and mobility hubs that serve wider community needs), as well as the varied income-generating opportunities associated with each site. To support the set-up and resourcing of the HGC Stewardship Hub, developers will be expected to pay a one-off registration fee, along with a developer seed funding contribution per dwelling. (For more details, see Section 3).

Conclusions

The HGC Stewardship Hub will provide a strong, resilient, accountable governance structure guided by a professional Board of Directors/Trustees with local authority/ unitary, specialist and community/resident representation. The Hub governance will be supported by a Community Forum, with representatives from the local community, voluntary and business sector as well as Neighbourhood Advisory Groups at site level. The Hub's governance will also be guided by a comprehensive Business Plan and a transparent reporting process, with complaints handling and performance monitoring. Additional monitoring by the Authorities will be secured through developer contributions. A Start-up Board will proceed once approvals from the Authorities are in place. As a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status, The Hub will function as an independent body and will not be impacted by the Local Government Reorganisation and the new unitary structure. The Hub Board will reflect any changes to the Authorities following the Reorganisation, with the number of Authority representatives adjusted accordingly.

The development of the SPD has been guided by extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders, partners and statutory consultees, and further information can be found in the accompanying HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD Consultation Statement.

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD sets out a framework for managing community assets, designed to support a vibrant, inclusive place where people feel connected and proud to live. By placing the involvement of local residents at the fore, it will help ensure that Hemel Hempstead continues to flourish as an attractive and resilient town for future generations.



Figure 2 : Hemel Garden Communities Illustrated Programme Area Map

1 Introduction

Document Status

The provisions of this Supplementary Planning Document will be applicable in Dacorum Borough upon the adoption of statutory policies in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, in relation to the stewardship of the allocation and development of Hemel Garden Communities, including Policies HGC1, HGC2, HGC3, HGC4, HGC5 and HC7 associated site allocation policies.

The provisions of this Supplementary Planning Document will be applicable in St Albans District upon the adoption of statutory policies in the St Albans City and District Council Local Plan to 2041, in relation to the stewardship of the allocation and development of Hemel Garden Communities, including Policies LG2, LG3 and H1 to H4.

1 Introduction

1.1 What is the Hemel Garden Communities Programme?

Hemel Hempstead was awarded Garden Town Status by the Government in 2019, following a successful bid including a HGC Charter developed in 2018 to set out the key principles for the town.

Collaborating as a partnership, Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), St Albans City and District Council (SADC), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), Hertfordshire Futures (formerly Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) and Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter (Herts IQ), are working together to deliver the Programme, alongside stakeholders and landowners/developers.

The HGC Programme Area has been defined through work on the HGC Spatial Vision 2021, and includes land within the administrative areas of Dacorum Borough and St Albans District and City. It encompasses the whole of the existing town of Hemel Hempstead, its two Opportunity Areas (Town Centre and Two Waters), and the employment areas of Maylands Business Park, including the planned expansion of employment land which forms part of Herts IQ and is located to the east of Maylands Business Park. The HGC Programme Area also includes the Growth Areas, which broadly consist of land to the east and north of Hemel Hempstead within St Albans District and Dacorum Borough.



Figure 3: Hemel Garden Communities (Illustrative only)

1 Introduction

1.2 Using this document

What is a Supplementary Planning Document?

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adds detail to policies contained in a Local Plan. It does not introduce new planning policy or impose unnecessary financial burdens. The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD is a guidance document and material consideration in planning decisions but does not form part of the statutory development plan.

Who should use this document?

This document is intended for use by anyone involved in planning applications within the HGC Programme Area including residents, landowners/developers, agents, architects, planning consultants, local authority officers, decision-makers and others. It should be used to ensure key matters related to stewardship and placemaking are taken into consideration in the planning and future development of the HGC Programme Area sites, including in the preparation of Planning Applications.

Role

The SADC Local Plan to 2041 and DBC Local Plan to 2041 establish the strategic policy framework for the delivery of growth across the HGC Programme Area. The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD is intended to guide development by establishing stewardship and placemaking development principles to achieve high-quality placemaking by providing a sustainable long-term approach to estate management and community development, reflecting the status of Hemel Hempstead as a Garden Town. It provides guidance on the implementation of Local Plan policies.

The SPD will inform the Authorities' pre-application services and assist in the determination of planning applications. This SPD provides a stewardship and placemaking strategy, associated core standards supported by a Matrix Criteria, and guidance on a preferred delivery model approach for stewardship. Additionally, this SPD provides alternative delivery model considerations, and additional delivery considerations and guidance related to the implementation of major development sites. Applicants are expected to engage early with the preferred delivery model provider, in line with the guidance set out in the SPD.

Purpose

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD is intended to provide additional guidance to support successful, coordinated outcomes across the HGC Programme Area. Effective stewardship provides a legacy for future generations by ensuring that high-quality public realm can be maintained in perpetuity, with local assets provided for through suitable

income streams. When referring to placemaking, in connection with stewardship, the focus is more on creating strong and thriving communities who are invested in the place where they live through a commitment to early and ongoing community development. The HGC Framework and Transformation SPD focus is more on the built environment, and design and quality of place. This includes empowering resident voices, meeting local needs, enabling collaboration and creating opportunities, together with adding value through maximising social, economic and environmental benefits.

How has this document been prepared?

This document has been prepared to guide the delivery of the HGC programme, including its associated homes, infrastructure, and transformation. This document has been prepared and adopted by St Albans City and District Council and Dacorum Borough Council in accordance with each Authorities' respective Local Plan, and the guidance and policies particularly related to HGC.

The document has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders and people in the local community. Further information is set out within the accompanying SPD Consultation Statement.

The SPD sets out a preferred delivery model for stewardship and placemaking, the HGC Stewardship Hub. To ensure the model can be fit for purpose a supporting high level Business Case was produced. The approach of the SPD has also been informed by the draft HGC Stewardship Hub Business Case to ensure that a long-term deliverable and viable model is provided. The threshold and geographical scope relate to the approach in the Business Case. The Hub's income and charging framework are considered indicative at this stage, with further minor refinement expected once the Hub reaches the Business Plan and set-up stage.

The requirements for producing SPDs are set out in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and this SPD has been prepared in accordance with the Regulations.

What are major development and strategic sites?

Major development is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plans as development over 10 dwellings. For the purpose of this SPD and the preferred delivery model, major development is development over 75 dwellings. Strategic Sites in the HGC Programme Area are set out on page 9 and relate to Hm11 and Hm13.

1 Introduction

1.2 Using this document, continued



Figure 4 : HGC New Neighbourhood Streets (Illustrative Only)

Dacorum Borough Council - Status and Weight in Decision Making

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD has been prepared in the context of the Dacorum Borough Council Local Plan to 2041. The adopted Stewardship and Placemaking SPD will have material planning weight and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the HGC Programme Area within Dacorum Borough. This SPD will also be used in discussions with the Authorities, including through pre-application discussions.

The provisions of this Supplementary Planning Document will be applicable in Dacorum Borough upon the adoption of statutory policies in the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, in relation to the allocation and development of Hemel Garden Communities, including Policies HGC1, HGC2, HGC3, HGC4, HGC5 and associated site allocation policies.

St Albans City & District Council - Status and Weight in Decision Making

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD has been prepared in the context of the St Albans City and District Council Local Plan to 2041. The adopted Stewardship and Placemaking SPD will have material planning weight and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the HGC Programme Area within St Albans District. This SPD will also be used in discussions with the Authorities, including through pre-application discussions.

The provisions of this Supplementary Planning Document will be applicable in St Albans District upon the adoption of statutory policies in the St Albans Local Plan, in relation to the allocation and development of Hemel Garden Communities, including Policies LG2, LG3 and H1 to H4.

Responding to SPD Guidance

Applicants and Authorities will work together to deliver the guidance of the SPD. This SPD sets out guidance regarding the implementation of Local Plan policies and is supported by Appendix 1 Stewardship Statement.

The SPD sets out Applicant guidance under Section 4, Delivery.

Where does the SPD apply?

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD applies to the HGC Programme Area (Figure 5) which includes site allocation identified in both Local Plans, as well as windfall sites within the HGC Programme Area.

Sites of 75 dwellings and above in size are expected to engage and participate in the preferred Delivery Model, the HGC Stewardship Hub. Smaller sites under 75 dwellings should contact the HGC Stewardship Hub for consideration. The preferred delivery model, the Stewardship Hub, is capable of supporting development at a strategic scale and has the scope to accommodate up to 30,000 homes, providing efficiencies from economies of scale. As a result, there is potential for the uptake of the stewardship delivery model from development beyond the HGC Programme Area within the wider districts of Dacorum and St Albans.

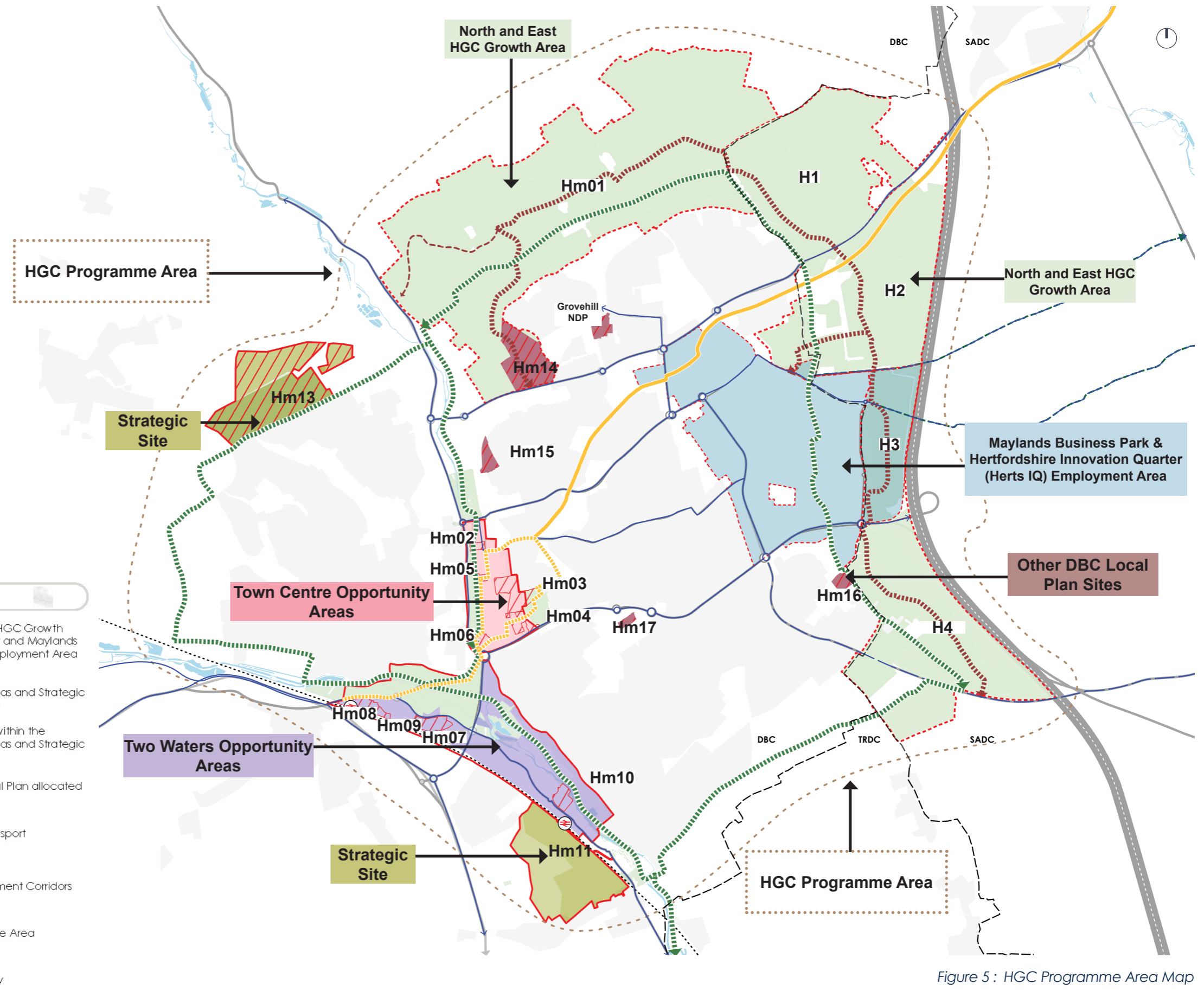
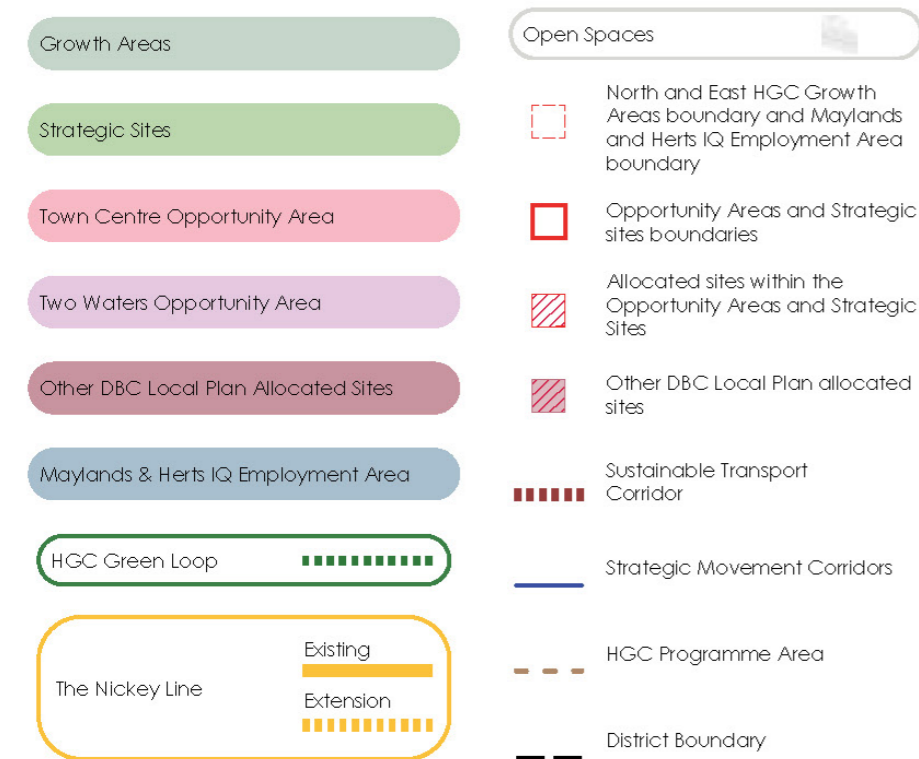


Figure 5: HGC Programme Area Map

1 Introduction

HGC Growth Areas

The HGC Growth Areas, to the North and East of Hemel Hempstead are:

- Hm01 North Hemel Hempstead - Within Dacorum Borough Council 5,000 homes (1,500 homes to 2041, 3,500 homes post 2041)
- H1 North Hemel Hempstead (SADC) – 1,500 homes
- H2 East Hemel Hempstead North (SADC) – 1,600 homes
- H3 East Hemel Hempstead Central (SADC) - 53 ha of Employment Land
- H4 East Hemel Hempstead South (SADC) - 2,400 homes

Strategic Sites

Strategic Sites are developments of large scale, approximately 500+ homes which are beyond the Growth Areas in the wider Programme Area. The Strategic Sites are:

- Hm11 Land at Shendish Manor and Fairfields (500 homes)
- Hm13 Polehanger Lane (750 homes)

Town Centre Opportunity Area

The Town Centre Opportunity Area includes sites:

- Hm02 Civic Centre (200 homes)
- Hm03 Hemel Hempstead Hospital (450 homes)
- Hm04 Paradise (350 homes)
- Hm05 Market Square (integrated health campus)
- Hm06 Riverside (500 homes)

Two Waters Opportunity Area

The Two Waters Opportunity Area sites include:

- Hm07 – Symbio Site, Whiteleaf Road (100 homes)
- Hm08 – Hemel Hempstead Station Gateway (390 homes)
- Hm09 - National Grid and 338-353 London Road (480 homes)
- Hm10 - Apsley Mills Retail Park (500 homes)

Other HGC Programme Area Sites

Sites that do not fall within the HGC Growth Areas; Strategic Sites; Town Centre & Two Waters Opportunity Areas are classed as other HGC Programme Area Sites. This includes the other DBC Local Plan allocations, sites from Neighbourhood Plans, as well as windfall development:

- Hm14 – Marchmont Farm (350 homes)
- Hm15 – Old Town (90 homes)
- Hm16 – Westwick Row (80 homes)
- Hm17 – Jarman Park (Retail)
- Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan Site (200 homes)
- Windfall Development in the HGC Programme Area (around 2,380 homes)



Figure 6 : HGC Green Loop and Grand Union Canal. (Illustrative only)

1 Introduction

1.3 Policy & Guidance Context

Overview

The HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD should be read alongside the relevant and up-to-date planning policy and evidence. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and relevant planning practice guidance, and the St Albans City and District Local Plan to 2041 or Dacorum Borough Local Plan to 2041. Relevant supporting material, including the Hemel Garden Communities Evidence Library documents and wider guidance should also be taken into account (See HGC Framework & Transformation SPD and the HGC Delivery Statement for further detail).

This SPD does not create new planning policy requirements (See Figure 7 for document context). It provides further guidance to support the implementation of policies within the St Albans City and District Local Plan 2041 and the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 2041, particularly those relating to the stewardship of HGC and the need for a coordinated approach across the Programme Area. Further detail on relevant policies for each authority is set out in the following sections.

National Planning Policy Context

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes the importance of creating well-designed, sustainable places that are supported by effective long-term management and stewardship.

The NPPF emphasises the value of community participation alongside effective engagement throughout the planning and development process (Chapter 12, Achieving Well-designed and Beautiful Places).

National policy also stresses the importance of ongoing maintenance, to ensure the delivery of high-quality places. In the chapter on Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes, the 2024 revision of the NPPF states that when planning for large-scale development, local authorities should: “Set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City Principles)”. This reference to maintaining quality over time implicitly supports the principle of long-term stewardship, especially in the context of Garden Communities.

The NPPF recognises the role of Supplementary Planning Documents in providing further guidance to support the implementation of Local Plan policies, particularly where strategic growth requires coordination across multiple sites, landowners and infrastructure providers.

Local Planning Policy Context

St Albans City and District Council and Dacorum Borough Council are progressing their respective Local Plans, which establish the strategic policy framework for the delivery of growth across the HGC Programme Area. The SPD supports the implementation of relevant policies within these plans, particularly those relating to stewardship, infrastructure delivery and coordinated development. Key policies are summarised in the following sections including in Figures 8 and 9. Applicants should have regard to other relevant SPDs and guidance documents, as well as the HGC Evidence Library which supports the policies, which are set out in Figure 10.

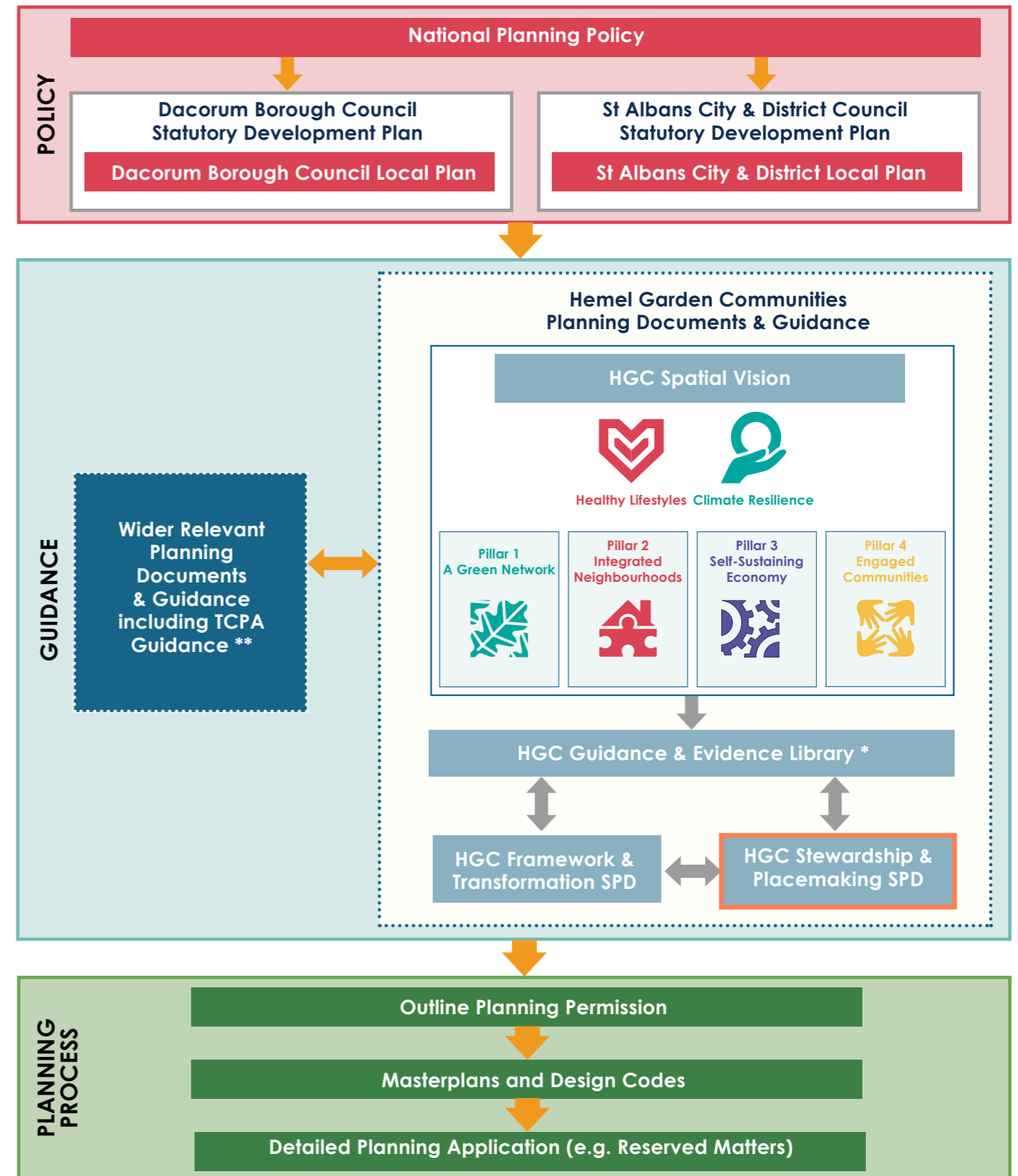


Figure 7 : HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD in Policy and Planning Context
 * = The HGC Guidance & Evidence Library is set out in the HGC Framework & Transformation SPD
 The HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD should be read alongside the relevant and up-to-date planning policy and evidence.

Dacorum Borough Council - Policy Context

The DBC Local Plan 2041 identifies HGC as a key component of its growth strategy, making a significant contribution to delivering the Plan's housing and employment objectives through a coordinated, programme-led approach to development.

The DBC Local Plan 2041 identifies a range of infrastructure, community facilities and other assets required to support development, many of which may form part of stewardship arrangements. Proposals should have regard to these wider policy requirements, including site allocations and Opportunity Areas when bringing development forward and preparing a stewardship approach.

The Key Local Plan Policies surrounding HGC have been developed in collaboration with the DBC and SADC Local Plans teams and the HGC Programme team. The HGC policies (HGC1, HGC2) have been developed to be mirrored within the DBC and SADC Local Plans. This SPD provides further guidance, in particular relation to Policy HGC2 Pillar 4 - Engaged Communities and Policy HC7 - Community Stewardship and Management.

Other relevant DBC Local Plan policies related to this SPD and to the delivery of homes and infrastructure are set out in Figure 8. The Grovehill and Great Gaddesden Neighbourhood Plans are also relevant. Applicants should have regard to other relevant guidance including the listed guidance in Figure 10 and guidance referenced in this SPD.

Figure 8 : DBC List of Sites, Wider Policies *Note: This is not an exhaustive list. The HGC Stewardship & Transformation SPD should be read alongside the relevant and up-to-date planning policy and evidence.

DBC POLICY SUMMARY

DBC Policy: Key Stewardship Policies

Strategic Policy HGC2 - Hemel Garden Communities Place Principles establishes a series of place principles, under the four key pillars from the HGC Spatial Vision, to enable the delivery of growth and transformation. Policy HGC2 Pillar 4 - Engaged Communities requires proposals to support collaborative stewardship arrangements between landowners, Authorities, community organisations and residents. Proposals should deliver the strategic stewardship and placemaking ambitions of the HGC Growth Areas, including strong governance and community engagement, and identify appropriate funding mechanisms to secure long-term management and maintenance and stewardship arrangements. The policy also promotes early activation of communities, including employment and community facilities alongside development, and supports long-term management of a wide range of community assets.

Policy HC7 - Community Stewardship and Management requires proposals to secure long-term management and maintenance of open space and community facilities to ensure their quality and accessibility are sustained. The policy supports involvement of residents, businesses and community organisations in stewardship, particularly on larger sites. Proposals should accord with Authority standards, set out stewardship arrangements where appropriate, and provide commuted sums where the Authority assumes responsibility.

DBC Policy: Other Relevant Policies to the HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD*

- Strategic Policy HGC1 - Transformation of Hemel Hempstead sets out housing targets (relevant to each District) and the need for development to be planned in accordance with the HGC Spatial Vision and Charter using the four 'pillars' (Green Network, Integrated Neighbourhoods, Self-Sustaining Economy, and Engaged Communities).
- Strategic Policy HC1- Health and Wellbeing
- Strategic Policy HGC3 – Town Centre Opportunity Area
- Strategic Policy HGC4 – Two Waters Opportunity Area
- Strategic Policy HGC5 – Maylands Opportunity Area
- Policy HC6 - Community Facilities
- DBC Local Plan - Chapter 6 - Natural Environment

DBC Policy: Relevant Neighbourhood Plan

- Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan
- Great Gaddesden Neighbourhood Plan

DBC Policy: Relevant HGC Site Allocations

- Hm01 - North Hemel Hempstead
- Hm02 Civic Centre (200 homes)
- Hm03 Hemel Hempstead Hospital (450 homes)
- Hm04 Paradise (350 homes)
- Hm05 Market Square (integrated health campus)
- Hm06 Riverside (500 homes)
- Hm07 – Symbio Site, Whiteleaf Road (100 homes)
- Hm08 – Hemel Hempstead Station Gateway (390 homes)
- Hm09 - National Grid and 338-353 London Road (480 homes)
- Hm10 - Apsley Mills Retail Park (500 homes)
- Hm11 Land at Shendish Manor and Fairfields (500 homes)
- Hm13 Polehanger Lane (750 homes)
- Hm14 – Marchmont Farm (350 homes)
- Hm15 – Old Town (90 homes)
- Hm16 – Westwick Row (80 homes)
- Hm17 – Jarman Park (Retail)
- Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan Site (200 homes)

St Albans City and District Council - Policy Context

The SADC Local Plan 2041 identifies HGC as a key component of its growth strategy, making a significant contribution to delivering the Plan's housing and employment objectives through a coordinated, programme-led approach to development.

The SADC Local Plan 2041 identifies a range of infrastructure, community facilities and other assets required to support development, many of which may form part of stewardship arrangements. Proposals should have regard to these wider policy requirements, including site allocations when bringing development forward and preparing a stewardship approach.

The Key Local Plan Policies surrounding HGC have been developed in collaboration with the SADC and DBC Local Plans teams and the HGC Programme team. The HGC policies (LG2 and LG3) have been developed to be mirrored within the SADC and DBC Local Plans. This SPD does not create new planning policy requirements, but provides further guidance, in particular relation to LG3 Pillar 4 - Engaged Communities, Policy LG1 Strategic Allocations and Strategic Policy SP14 - Delivery of Infrastructure.

The SADC Local Plan allocates the following sites within the HGC Programme Area: North Hemel Hempstead (H1); East Hemel Hempstead (North) (H2); East Hemel Hempstead (Central) (H3); and East Hemel Hempstead (South) (H4). This SPD provides further information to applicants with regards to Stewardship for these sites, within the HGC Programme Area.

Other relevant SADC Local Plan policies to this SPD, and related to the delivery of homes and infrastructure are listed in Figure 9, as well as the Redbourn Neighbourhood Plan.

Applicants should have regard to other relevant guidance including the listed guidance (Figure 10) and guidance referenced in this SPD.

SADC POLICY SUMMARY

SADC Policy: Key Stewardship Policies
Policy LG3 - Hemel Garden Communities Growth Areas Place Principles establishes a series of place principles, under the four key pillars from the HGC Spatial Vision, to enable the delivery of growth and transformation. Policy LG3 – Pillar 4: Engaged Communities requires proposals to support a coordinated, programme-wide approach to stewardship across the HGC Growth Areas. This includes establishing a single umbrella stewardship body approach to provide strong governance, partnership working and community engagement. Proposals should deliver the strategic stewardship and legacy placemaking ambitions of HGC, supported by sustainable funding arrangements, including income-generating assets and innovative initiatives.

The policy also promotes early activation of communities, including employment and community facilities alongside development, and supports long-term management of a wide range of community assets.

Policy LG1 Strategic Allocations requires large development of 250 or more homes to establish an appropriate community stewardship and legacy body, supported by sufficient assets, to secure the long-term sustainable management of community facilities and open space.

Strategic Policy SP14 - Delivery of Infrastructure requires development to secure the delivery, funding and long-term management of infrastructure necessary to support growth. The policy supports coordinated approaches across sites and enables contributions towards the establishment, resourcing and ongoing operation of stewardship arrangements, including overarching stewardship bodies where appropriate.

SADC Policy: HGC Site Allocations

- H1 - North Hemel Hempstead
- H2 - East Hemel Hempstead (North)
- H3 – East Hemel Hempstead (Central)
- H4 - East Hemel Hempstead (South)

SADC Policy: Relevant Neighbourhood Plan

- Redbourn Neighbourhood Plan

SADC Policy: Other Relevant Policies to the HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD*

Policy LG2 - Support for Transformation of Hemel Hempstead sets out housing targets (relevant to each District), jobs target, and the need for development to be planned in accordance with the HGC Spatial Vision and Charter using the four 'pillars' (Green Network, Integrated Neighbourhoods, Self-Sustaining Economy, and Engaged Communities).

- Strategic Policy SP7 - Community Infrastructure
- COM3 – Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities
- Strategic Policy SP10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure
- SADC Local Plan - Chapter 10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Figure 9: SADC Policies, Wider Policies & Site Allocations

* Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

The HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD should be read alongside the relevant and up-to-date planning policy and evidence.

1 Introduction

Guidance

The HGC Programme is underpinned by a comprehensive evidence base, supporting the Local Plans for SADC and DBC, and will be a material consideration in planning applications.

Applicants should have regard to the evidence and guidance documents in a manner proportionate to the scale of proposed development. The HGC Framework & Transformation SPD provides further detail on the HGC Evidence Library. Further background information on the different HGC workstreams and evidence is set out in the HGC Delivery Statement.

Hertfordshire County Council Context

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the Highway Authority and a key provider of strategic infrastructure including Education, Adult and Care and waste services, plays a central role in enabling and supporting growth across the County.

HCC provides guidance on infrastructure planning and delivery, including the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions, which sets out the approach to securing planning obligations, funding and provision of infrastructure required to support growth.

HCC also prepares strategic documents, such as the Local Transport Plan (LTP4), and manages services and assets which require long-term operation and maintenance. In addition, The County Council manages a range of services and assets, including transport networks, rights of way and green infrastructure, which require ongoing management and maintenance.

HCC's role in planning, delivering and managing infrastructure, alongside the services and assets it provides, forms an important part of the wider stewardship context, including the long-term operation and maintenance of transport networks, rights of way, education facilities and green infrastructure, which contribute to how places function and are sustained over time.

FURTHER RELEVANT GUIDANCE

Relevant HGC Guidance & Evidence Library**:

- HGC Charter (2018)
- HGC Spatial Vision (2021) and associated Spatial Pillars
- HGC Framework & Transformation SPD
- HGC Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024)
- HGC Nickey Line Vision & Strategy (2025)

Wider Guidance & Evidence Library:

- Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Principles
- The Prospectus for New Garden Communities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018)
- Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Stewardship resources including Toolkit: Long-term stewardship in new communities
- Homes England Gardens Communities Toolkit (2019)
- Competition and Markets Authority's study into Housebuilding (Feb 2024)
- The New Towns Taskforce Final Report (2025)
- Government Consultation on 'Reducing the Prevalence of Private Estate Management Arrangements' (closed Mar 2026)

Hertfordshire County Council Guidance:

- HCC Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance (P&MPDG)
- HCC Service Provision and Place-Making Guide (2025)(SP&PMG)
- HCC Developer Contributions Guidance
- Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework (2025)
- Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 10 : Relevant Evidence and Guidance Documents

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

The HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD should be read alongside the relevant and up-to-date planning policy and evidence.

**Refer to the HGC Framework & Transformation SPD for further detail on the HGC Evidence Library and HGC Guidance.

1 Introduction

Wider Significant Context

Stewardship is increasingly recognised as a key component of place-based planning and sustainable development. In the Garden City Principles, set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), stewardship is identified as a fundamental requirement for the successful delivery of Garden Communities and reflects the legacy of the original Garden Cities. It is seen as vital to successful placemaking, fostering community ownership, empowerment and long-term sustainability. [Learn more about Garden City Principles here.](#)

The TCPA has produced an online toolkit for Stewardship in New Communities, which identifies key stages to help Authorities deliver an enduring stewardship approach. It recognises that setting out expectations and guidance for long-term stewardship on a development site, or across a whole authority in planning policy (including SPDs), is one of the strongest tools Authorities currently have available to ensure development is not only delivered to a high-quality, but will be well maintained into the future.

The Prospectus for New Garden Communities (published by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018), sets out several principles for delivering successful, long-term communities. These include an emphasis on the importance of legacy and stewardship arrangements – referencing the need for these to ‘be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community’. The Homes England Garden Communities Toolkit (2019) also sets out ‘legacy’ requirements, recognising the need for early planning to explore how communities can be involved in long-term stewardship.

Although not specifically focussing on Garden Communities, The New Towns Taskforce Final Report (September 2025) firmly establishes stewardship as a core pillar for the next generation of large-scale communities. It states, ‘a sustainable stewardship model should be in place from the outset, including clear governance and funding structures to manage and maintain communal assets over the long-term’.

The need for a robust stewardship approach in Hemel Hempstead, also stems from the challenges of the current situation, which is fragmented and inconsistent across new developments in the local area. Estate management companies charge varying fees, with little transparency or accountability and this has resulted in assets being neglected and resident dissatisfaction. In February 2024, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published a report into housebuilding that reiterated these concerns, highlighting widespread issues with estate management provision across the UK. This has been followed up by the Government’s consultation on Reducing the Prevalence of Private Estate Management Arrangements, which concluded in March 2026 with findings yet to be published.

Following the CMA Report, a new approach to stewardship and placemaking has been developed by Greenbelt (land management specialists) and Community Stewardship Solutions (leading national experts in the delivery of stewardship). The HGC Stewardship Hub Model draws on their expert knowledge, best practice and learning from sites nationwide and provides a new and permanent solution to the ownership and management of Public Open Space and associated assets. The approach is in its infancy and Community Stewardship Solutions are working with many Authorities to deliver it, with Calderdale and South West Essex the first Authorities on board.



Figure 11 : Transformed Neighbourhood Centre (Illustrative only)

1 Introduction

1.4 What does good Stewardship and Placemaking look like?

Drawing on the principles set out by the TCPA and guidance from the original Garden City movement, there are some excellent examples of good stewardship and placemaking that have inspired the aims set out in this SPD, all with a focus on community involvement:

Highfield Park Trust, St Albans

- Charity set up in 1996 to manage 82 acres of park land, following the closure and redevelopment of two mental health hospitals in St Albans into an 800-home site.
- Received an initial endowment of £2 million from the Department of Health, which it has invested and sustained.
- Range of income streams including rental of various properties within the park, investment income from the endowment, programme of events, hiring out the venue, fundraising, donations and grants.
- No service charge for residents.
- Calendar of community engagement/participation and teams of local volunteers.
- Long-standing recreational groups and sporting activities.
- Trestle Arts Base based in High End Hospital Chapel.

Caddington Woods, Bedfordshire

- Development of 325 homes at Caddington Woods, set up Caddington and Slip End Community Trust to own and manage public open spaces, play areas and oversee community development, integrating existing residents with new ones.
- Endowment of 46 affordable homes to fund the maintenance and green space, community facilities and bus service.
- No service charge.

Whitehill and Bordon, East Hampshire

- New development of up to 3,350 new homes and 3,500 new jobs, along with new schools, facilities and green space on former Ministry of Defence Land.
- Whitehill and Bordon Regeneration Company (master developer) working in partnership with East Hampshire District Council, set up Whitehill and Bordon Community Trust – a registered charity focusing on community engagement and buy-in, through s106 obligation.
- Finance includes developer 5-year start-up funding with Business Plan, mandatory levy from residents, income from commercial venues, capital funds, grants for skills and development, community events fundraising.
- The Land Trust maintains the Hogmoor Inclosure country park and green infrastructure.



Figure 12 : Photos from top left: Highfield Park Trust, Caddington Woods, Whitehill and Bordon

Guided by the Local Plan Policies and HGC Spatial Vision, the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking Vision is to establish a single, overarching stewardship and placemaking model with an umbrella stewardship body approach to its governance. Through community embedded local leadership and a viable and sustainable mixed income and charging framework, community assets and infrastructure will be managed and maintained, enabling vibrant, inclusive neighbourhoods with high-quality placemaking, that thrive for generations to come. This will ensure the long-term and equitable management of assets and services secured by landowners/developers, across the HGC Programme Area.



Figure 13: New HGC Local Centres (Illustrative only)

2 Vision

2.1 HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD Objectives

The HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD Objectives have been developed to guide the Stewardship and Placemaking SPD. These Objectives build directly upon the Local Plan policies and the HGC Spatial Vision. The relationship between these aspects is set out within Figure 14 below. The SPD Objectives have also been aligned with the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD to provide a consistent and coherent approach. Development proposals within the HGC Programme Area are expected to demonstrate how they respond to and support each other.

| HGC Stewardship & Placemaking SPD Objectives | Local Plan Policy Reference | Spatial Vision & Pillars Links |
|---|--|---|
| <p>One Place</p> <p>A long-term One Place partnership approach, supporting transformation across the town.</p> | <p>DBC Policies: HGC1, HGC2, HGC3, HGC4, HGC5</p> <p>SADC Policies: LG2, LG3</p> | <p>A Green Network</p> <p>Integrated Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Self-Sustaining Economy</p> <p>Engaged Communities</p> |
| <p>Community and Placemaking</p> <p>Creating community cohesion through engagement and placemaking activities to maximise social value benefits, including supporting healthy lifestyles and climate resilience, along with an inclusive collaboration approach supporting local stewardship bodies (e.g. Sunnyside Rural Trust, Highfield Park Trust, The Box Moor Trust, The Blue Tangerine Federation, Earthworks, Grand Union Community Energy).</p> | <p>DBC Policies: HGC1, HGC2, HC7</p> <p>SADC Policies: LG2, LG3, SP14</p> | <p>Engaged Communities</p> |
| <p>Governance</p> <p>A HGC Programme Area-wide adaptable, transparent and resilient governance structure enabling accountable decision making, whilst embedded in the community.</p> | <p>DBC Policies: HGC1, HGC2, HC7</p> <p>SADC Policies: LG2, LG3, SP14</p> | <p>Overarching Vision</p> |
| <p>Viability</p> <p>An affordable and viable model supported by a range of mixed income funding generators providing sustainable solutions 'in perpetuity'.</p> | <p>DBC Policies: HGC1, HGC2, HC7</p> <p>SADC Policies: LG2, LG3, SP14</p> | <p>Self-Sustaining Economy</p> <p>Engaged Communities</p> <p>Integrated Neighbourhoods</p> |
| <p>Model Capabilities</p> <p>An effective delivery model that aligns with the core standards set out in the Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy, for The Functions, Governance, and Funding and Resourcing in Section 3.</p> | <p>DBC Policies: HGC1, HGC2, HC7</p> <p>SADC Policies: LG2, LG3, SP14</p> | <p>Self-Sustaining Economy</p> <p>Engaged Communities</p> <p>Integrated Neighbourhoods</p> |

Figure 14 : HGC Stewardship & Placemaking Objective Table

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.1 Approach

The Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy builds on the Key Local Plan Policies (set out in Section 1 of the SPD), as well as the HGC Spatial Vision and the SPD's Vision and Objectives (Section 2).

The Strategy sets out core standards to guide the preferred delivery model for Stewardship and Placemaking, as follows:

1. **The Functions** that make up the model;
2. **The Governance** that will underpin the model; and
3. **The Funding and Resources** required to sustain the model in perpetuity.

At the end of this chapter there is more information on the preferred delivery model and how it was identified as the best approach for Stewardship and Placemaking across the HGC Programme Area, using an evaluation tool called the Matrix Criteria which aligns with Local Plan policies and the SPD's objectives. This tool will be used by the Authorities to help assess the Applicant's Stewardship and Placemaking proposals.

The Applicant should submit a Stewardship Statement (Appendix 1), reflecting a strong and balanced approach across each of the criterion. (Further explanation of this process can be found in Section 4.)

If the Applicant proposes an alternative to the preferred delivery model, the Matrix Criteria should be used to ensure there is a consistent stewardship and placemaking approach throughout the HGC Programme Area.

The Matrix Criteria are set out below and then linked to the core standards for the Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy in the following sections, with helpful summary tables.

Matrix Criteria:

1. One Place

A long-term One Place approach, enabling transformation across the HGC Programme Area through high-quality placemaking standards, social inclusion and effective infrastructure delivery and funding, secured through the planning process. Capacity to oversee a range of new infrastructure from HGC Programme Area-wide district assets through to neighbourhood assets.

2. Community & Placemaking

Creating community cohesion across the HGC Programme Area through engagement and placemaking activities to facilitate the creation of new communities, as well as wider community integration. Actively collaborating with local community organisations and stewardship bodies to promote inclusivity, deliver social value, and support healthy lifestyles and climate resilience, (e.g. Sunnyside Rural Trust, Highfield Park Trust, The Box Moor Trust, The Blue Tangerine Federation, Earthworks, Grand Union Community Energy, West Herts College and Hertfordshire Youth Services).

3. Governance

A HGC Programme Area-wide, adaptable, transparent and resilient governance structure with the ability to evolve the stewardship functions, roles, responsibilities and area scope. Enabling independent and accountable decision making, whilst embedded in the community.

4. Viability

An equitable and sustainable financial model providing a high-quality, yet affordable approach for residents and landowners/developers. A Business Plan that demonstrates a fair and affordable mixed income and charging framework, with a scalable approach to support the variety of sites. A range of income generators and assets, that can provide additional revenue, as well as a sinking fund.

5. Model Capabilities

An effective delivery model that aligns with the core standards and has the ability and knowledge to manage specialist assets, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) using local experts.

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.2 Stewardship and Placemaking Core Standards

The Functions

| The Functions: Matrix Criteria Links |
|---|
| <p>1. One Place</p> <p>Providing a collaborative and joined-up approach to enable transformation across the Programme Area.</p> |
| <p>2. Community and Placemaking</p> <p>To ensure new and existing residents can integrate and play a part in the place where they live, so they feel invested and connected.</p> |
| <p>3. Governance</p> <p>To ensure the functions and assets are managed in an accountable and transparent manner.</p> |
| <p>4. Viability</p> <p>A Business Plan that achieves a scalable approach to support a variety of sites.</p> |
| <p>5. Model Capabilities</p> <p>Aligns with the core standards and has the ability and knowledge to manage specialist assets (SuDS, SANG) using local experts.</p> |

Approach

The stewardship and placemaking preferred delivery model will have a variety of functions to support the expected delivery aims, quality and long-term management of place. As set out in the Matrix Criteria (point 1) there will be a One Place approach to ensure collaboration across the HGC Programme Area, with residents playing a meaningful role in decision making to reflect a focus on Community and Placemaking (point 2 in the Matrix). Each development site is expected to provide proposals to align and support the functions. Major sites, typically over 500 homes, generate a wider provision of different assets and infrastructure to support the development. These functions are grouped under 4 key areas:

Public Open Space Management and Maintenance

Well-managed and maintained publicly accessible open space will provide a high-quality environment within which residents can live healthy and fulfilling lives. There will be a wide range of typologies provided across development sites, including nature areas, sports pitches, parks, woodland, sustainable urban drainage features and more.

Financial Management and Investment

Robust financial management, investment and treasury approaches will be required to ensure financial viability and sustainability from the outset, with prudent business planning and sustainable, mixed income generation. The preferred delivery model will pro-actively look to leverage additional forms of income to complement and supplement income from service charges.

Facilities and Services

The preferred delivery model will be endowed with a range of community facilities which may include, for example, community centres, sports pavilions, playing fields, arts/cultural spaces, play areas, allotments, community gardens

Placemaking

The preferred delivery model will play a crucial role in fostering relationships and establishing activities that support the creation of a successful community, as part of the overall vision for HGC and the Programme Area and beyond.



Figure 15: Active and Sustainable Travel near Hemel Hempstead Station (Illustrative only)

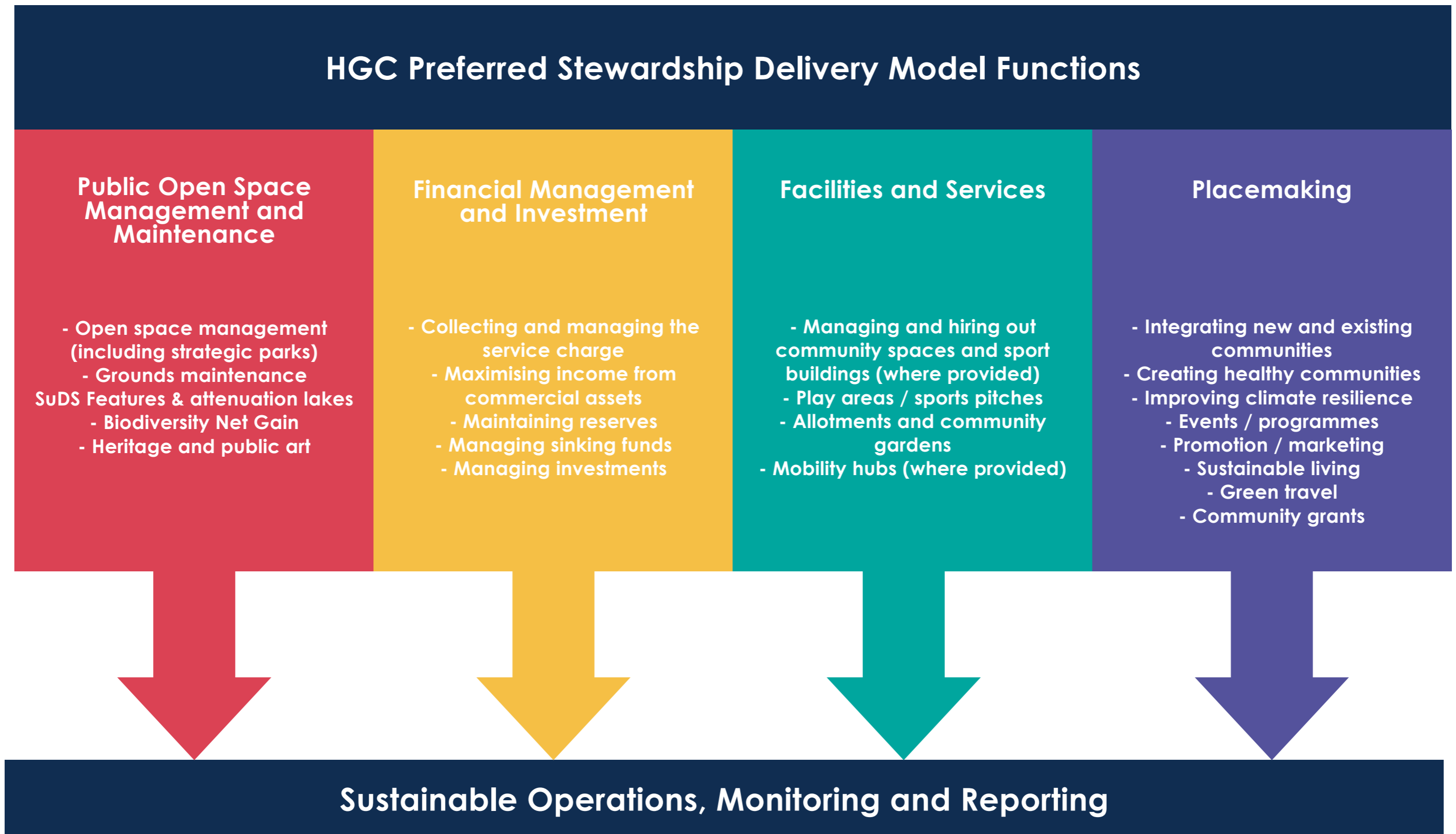


Figure 16 : HGC Preferred Stewardship Delivery Model Functions

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

Management and Maintenance of Assets

The preferred delivery model will be responsible for the long-term operation and management of community assets and infrastructure across the HGC Programme Area. It will control the freehold (or long lease or licence) of both strategic and smaller scale assets. This allows for:

- Flexibility and evolution of those assets and their function;
- A single body to be the point of contact for residents across the Programme Area;
- Cohesion and consistency of quality and approach to management and maintenance;
- Efficiencies and effectiveness that can be achieved from management and deployment of resources and funds by a single body.

It may be agreed that selected assets will be adopted by the Authorities, e.g. Highways or SuDS functions, as part of statutory requirements. In the case of specialist assets, such as sports centres and health centres, these should be owned by the preferred delivery model, but it may be that the delivery of services is contracted out to specialist operators or agreements, put in place via leasehold arrangements.

In the case of green or blue infrastructure, such as SANG, public open space and water courses, this may be managed on behalf of the preferred delivery model, by local or national stewardship organisations who specialise in this. The approach should have regard to relevant guidance, including the HGC Framework and Transformation SPD and HGC Green Infrastructure Strategy. It should also draw on [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework](#) and their [15 Green Infrastructure Principles](#) for design, delivery and management of Green and Blue Infrastructure, with the aim to ensure that environmental benefits are sustained over the lifetime of the development.

Details of the assets and infrastructure that will be placed in the care of the preferred delivery model, will be set out by the Applicant in the Stewardship Statement (Appendix 1) including information on quantum, asset types and phasing (more details on this can be found in Section 4).

Community Development

One of the main roles of the preferred delivery model, will be to facilitate the creation of integrated, inclusive and resilient communities. An ongoing programme of community development and engagement, through which residents have a say and influence the actions that are taken, will help foster a sense of ownership, belonging and empowerment. This will be further reinforced through community/resident representation in the governance structure.

| Asset Type | HGC Growth Areas & DBC Strategic Sites (Providing a variety of infrastructure requirements) | Other Sites (Above 75 homes, but without significant infrastructure) |
|---|---|--|
|  <p>Green & Blue Infrastructure</p> | <p>Country Parks</p> <p>Green Corridors</p> <p>Play (LEAPs, NEAPs, LAPs)</p> <p>Allotments</p> <p>The Green Loop</p> <p>The Nickey Line (new extensions)</p> <p>Woodlands</p> <p>SANG (existing and new)</p> <p>Youth Play (Neighbourhood park/Country Park)</p> <p>SuDS & Swales</p> | <p>Green Corridors</p> <p>Amenity Green Space</p> <p>Play (LEAPs, LAPs)</p> <p>SuDS & Swales</p> |
|  <p>Sports & Leisure</p> | <p>Sports Facilities</p> <p>Paying Pitches</p> <p>Multi-use Games Area (MUGA)</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
|  <p>Community Facilities</p> | <p>Community Centre</p> <p>Local Centre</p> <p>Mobility Hubs</p> <p>Health Facilities</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
|  <p>Site Specific</p> | <p>Unadopted Roads, Cycle & Footpaths</p> <p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Heritage e.g. Farmsteads</p> <p>Public Realm</p> | <p>Unadopted Roads, Cycle & Footpaths</p> <p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Heritage e.g. Farmsteads</p> <p>Public Realm</p> |

For further details on key terms in this diagram please refer to the Glossary *Figure 17: HGC S&P SPD Asset Table*

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.3 Governance

Governance: Matrix Criteria Links

1. One Place

Providing a collaborative and joined-up approach to enable transformation across the Programme Area.

2. Community and Placemaking

To ensure new and existing residents can integrate and play a part in the place where they live, so they feel invested and connected.

3. Governance To ensure the functions and assets are managed in an accountable and transparent manner.

4. Viability

A Business Plan that achieves a scalable approach to support the variety of site sizes and locations.

5. Model Capabilities

An overarching approach across the HGC Programme Area. An effective model supported by experts that maximises the opportunity of site uptake with the capacity to manage all sites and grow.

Approach

A strong, accountable and transparent governance structure and Board is critical to the success of the preferred stewardship delivery model. As set out in the Matrix Criteria, (point 3, Governance) the aim is for both a Programme Area-wide and an adaptable approach to allow roles and functions to evolve. The key aspects of the governance for the preferred stewardship delivery model are set out below:

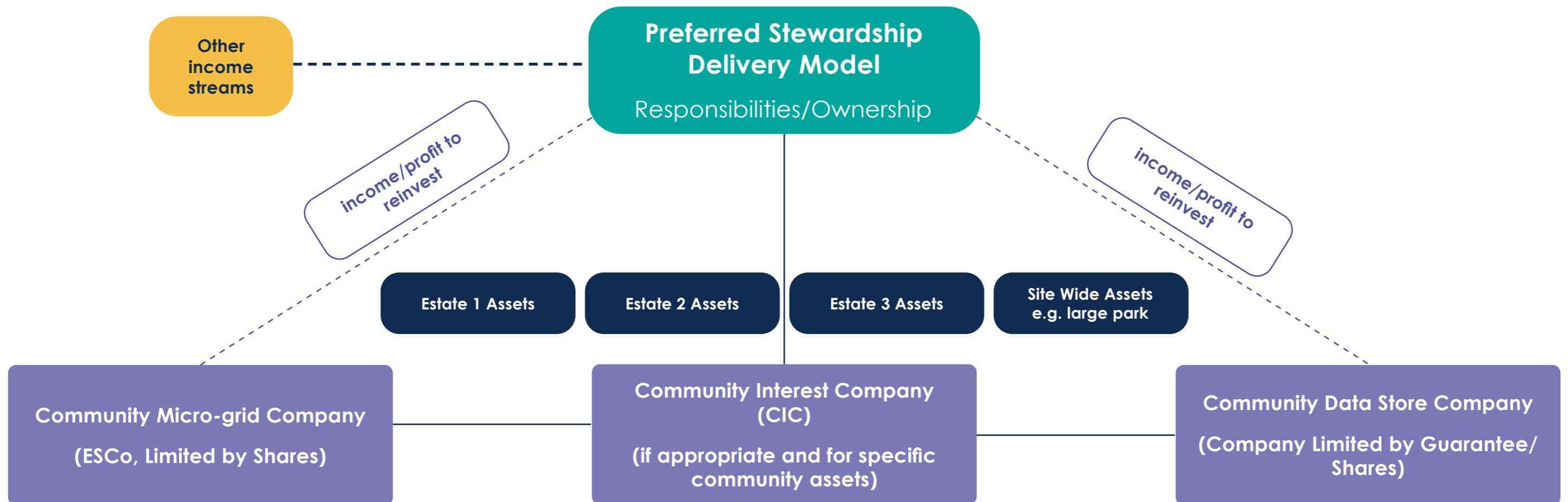
Governance Structure

- A Company Limited by Guarantee that can take on charitable status.
- A recognised not-for-profit structure ensuring profits are recycled into the company and the communities.
- Embedded in the community through its Board of Directors/Trustees, with resident representatives, as well as from the Local Authorities and local specialists/experts.
- Guided by the Stewardship Advisory Group which will evolve into the Community Forum, with representatives from the local community, voluntary and business sectors.
- Has the ability to flex over time to accommodate an increasing range of functions and therefore roles and responsibilities.
- Management of liability for Directors/Trustees.
- Allows for evolution of additional income streams and assets to respond to changing needs.
- Supported by a robust Business Plan to ensure it has a sustainable, long-term financial model.
- Facilitates a simple charging approach capable of ensuring consistency, equity and ease of understanding for residents.
- Has the ability to apply for external grants and funds.
- Allows for the creation of a brand and culture which promotes investment by volunteers, partners and grant givers who can easily identify and feel secure with the not-for-profit approach.
- Allows for related companies/subsidiaries, such as a part community-owned Energy Services Company (ESCo) and/or data management company, where appropriate.

With an overarching umbrella stewardship body approach to its governance, the preferred stewardship delivery model will also serve as a single point of contact across sites within the HGC Programme Area, demonstrating Model Capabilities (point 5 of the Matrix Criteria). The Stewardship Structure is set out in Figure 19.

Stewardship Structure

Over-arching preferred stewardship delivery model oversees all the Estates/Developments and any other potential subsidiary organisations in the HGC Programme Area



For further details on key terms in this diagram please refer to the Glossary

Figure 18: Stewardship Structure

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

Stewardship Advisory Group

As part of the development of the governance approach for the preferred delivery model, the HGC Stewardship Advisory Group has been set up. This group includes key local representatives from the voluntary, community and business sector within the Programme Area and wider area of influence, who share their insight and experience on stewardship and placemaking. This group has provided capacity, support and guidance on the direction of the SPD and the Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy.

Start-up Board Requirements

The Stewardship Advisory Group will continue to play a key role in shaping stewardship and placemaking for HGC and help to provide the foundations for the Start-up Board for the stewardship delivery model. The Start-up Board should:

- Consist of 6 Board members, to include representatives from the Authorities, Landowners/Developers/Registered Housing Providers, Stewardship Advisory Group;
- Agree Outline Business Plan;
- Support the Authorities in establishing the preferred delivery model and Full Board;
- Establish community partnerships and undertake activities to facilitate community empowerment and integration;
- Review and endorse stewardship proposals from development sites ahead of wider authority approval.

Following the setting up of the preferred delivery model, the Stewardship Advisory Group will evolve into the Community Forum. It will expand to include residents, as well as additional representatives from the local community, statutory sector, business sector and wider area of influence, for example, sports bodies and health organisations, to support the range of assets being managed. This Forum will provide strategic input to the rolling Business Plan, advising on local need and demand. There will also be the aim to put a Community Development Officer in place to provide support and continuity, particularly in the early years of operation. As the Start-up Board evolves into a Full Board set up, there may be a range of other forums/committees established to support it.

Full Board Requirements

The Full Board will provide ongoing strategic leadership and oversight for the preferred delivery model. The Full Board should:

- Consist of 12 Board members, to include representatives from the Local Authorities, Landowners/Developers/Registered Housing Providers, Local Experts (to include Community Forum), Residents;
- Deliver against the Vision, Strategy and Core Functions;
- Have a mixed skills base, to ensure it can carry out its roles and responsibilities professionally;
- Be community-centred and drive innovation and income generation;
- Agree the best approach for the ownership, management and maintenance of assets, non-adopted assets, and lease/licence arrangements within the Programme Area and beyond;
- Proactively look to leverage additional forms of income to complement and supplement income from service charges;
- Utilise, as appropriate, existing local community sector organisations to support the delivery of the Core Functions.



Figure 19: Stewardship Advisory Group Meeting

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.4 Funding And Resources

| Funding and Resources: Matrix Criteria Links |
|--|
| <p>1. One Place</p> <p>Providing a collaborative and joined-up approach to enable transformation across the Programme Area.</p> |
| <p>2. Community and Placemaking</p> <p>To ensure new and existing residents can integrate and play a part in the place where they live, so they feel invested and connected.</p> |
| <p>3. Governance</p> <p>To ensure the functions and assets are managed in an accountable and transparent manner.</p> |
| <p>4. Viability</p> <p>A Business Plan that achieves a scalable approach to support the variety of site sizes and locations.</p> |
| <p>5. Model Capabilities</p> <p>An overarching approach across the HGC Programme Area. An effective model supported by experts that maximise the opportunity of site uptake with the capacity to manage all sites and grow.</p> |

delivery model provider. They will carry out site management and maintenance and provide regular reporting and payments to the preferred delivery model provider.

Funding for a staff team is also required, including a community development officer with the potential ability to undertake specialist provisions such as on-site sport activation. This resourcing requires careful planning and early discussions.

Developer Contributions

As set out in Local Plan policies, developer contributions will be expected to help fund the set-up, resourcing and monitoring of the preferred delivery model. Developer contributions in the form of one-off payments will enable Applicants to gain access to legal set-up requirements to join the preferred delivery model provider. A fee per dwelling will help cover the resourcing costs required for the provider. Separate developer contributions will help support the long-term monitoring of the provider. Endowments or retrospective contributions will be expected from developers to help fund the setting up and resourcing of the preferred delivery model. Gap funding may also be required from first occupation, to cover the period before the development is fully occupied.

Approach

The biggest challenge to success is generating sufficient revenue to cover stewardship costs ‘in perpetuity’. The preferred delivery model has been tested via a Business Case to ensure it has a sustainable and financially viable model (point 4, Viability in the Matrix Criteria). The Business Case demonstrated it could provide a high-quality, but cost-effective approach for residents and developers, with a fair and affordable mixed income and charging framework, which is scalable. It is also key, that the preferred delivery model generates additional revenue, which could be through endowments, to ensure there is a sufficient sinking fund for costs associated with the long-term management and maintenance of assets. In addition, it must be an effective model, supported by experts, to maximise the opportunity of site uptake, with capacity to manage all sites and grow (in line with Model Capabilities, point 5 in the Matrix Criteria).

Income is needed to not only manage, maintain and monitor assets, but also to carry out placemaking activities to facilitate community creation, empowerment, and integration from the outset. A managing agent will collect an annual service charge from the residents on each development site and manage related resident issues on behalf of the preferred

Delivering a Sustainable Mixed Income and Charging Framework

Each site within the HGC Programme Area is likely to have a different mix of assets that could generate income, due to the mix and variety of sites. The Town and Country Planning Association best practice recommends that aiming for around five to seven different income streams helps reduce the reliance on the residents' Service Charge, to deliver a suitably sustainable approach. This best practice can be applied to the largest of the development sites, however some of the smaller sites may not be able to achieve this amount of variety.

There is no specific formula for the Applicant to provide on a site. However, Figure 20 provides an indication of how a range of mixed income generation options could be

rated in terms of delivery priority (with 1 being the highest priority and 3 being the lowest). It also shows whether they are low, medium, or high risk in terms of financial stability and whether they are likely to generate low, medium, or high returns. A good scenario would be a high proportion of priority 1 generators, that have low risk and high returns, but some lower income generators, such as sports pitches and community centres are also important because of their value to placemaking, even though they may not bring in as much revenue.

| Priority | Type of Income | Risk | Return |
|----------|---|--------|--------|
| 1 | Service Charges | Low | High |
| 1 | Endowments | Low | High |
| 1 | S106 Funding | Low | High |
| 1 | CIL Funding | Low | High |
| 1 | Commercial Rent/Revenue - Properties, Multi-Use Buildings, Floorspace, Land | Low | Medium |
| 2 | Investments | Medium | Medium |
| 2 | Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) | Medium | Medium |
| 2 | Rent/Revenue - Local Centres, Community Centres, Arts Centres | Medium | Low |
| 2 | Rent/Revenue - Sports Pitches/Playing Fields | Low | Low |
| 2 | Innovative Income Generation e.g. Community Data Trust, Solar Farm | High | Medium |
| 3 | Public Sector Grants | Low | Medium |
| 3 | Charitable Grants | Low | Medium |

Figure 20: Mixed income generation options



For further details on key terms in this diagram please refer to the Glossary

Figure 21 : Examples of More Innovative Income Generation

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

Residents' Service Charge

The residents' service charge, or Stewardship Charge, on each site should be set at an 'affordable' rate, in line with the Matrix Criteria for the preferred stewardship delivery model (point 4, Viability). Concerns over high resident charges were raised in the Competition and Markets Authority's Report (2024) into estate management provision, that found many homeowners faced 'high and unclear' charges that can be 'opaque' and 'excessive'. In order to address this, research was carried out into service charges on new sites local to the HGC Programme Area to determine an acceptable benchmark.

Out of the sites reviewed across the local and wider area from publicly open sources, where the developments were considered comparable to Local Plan policy expectations, the majority fell into a range from £300-£340 per annum for a 3-bedroom home. Key factors that may have influenced the variations in the benchmarking exercise were:

- Number and type of strategic assets provided
- Quantum of unadopted private roads
- The standard of service e.g. how many times the grass is cut yearly
- Whether affordable housing tenants pay an equitable service charge
- Size and the quality of the site
- Ratio of green infrastructure to development

The benchmarking exercise has helped shape the mixed income and charging framework expected to be provided by the preferred delivery model, and to ensure the service charge is kept at an affordable level. An affordable charge is considered to be within the range of £300-£340 per annum, for a 3-bedroom home (as of April 2026, see Figure 22 below). The variable factors will influence where the service charge level falls and may impact affordability.

Applicants will be expected to apply affordability benchmarking as a guiding framework, and demonstrate how this can be maintained in perpetuity (subject to CPI, and minor unforeseen site costs) to inform the stewardship and placemaking proposal.

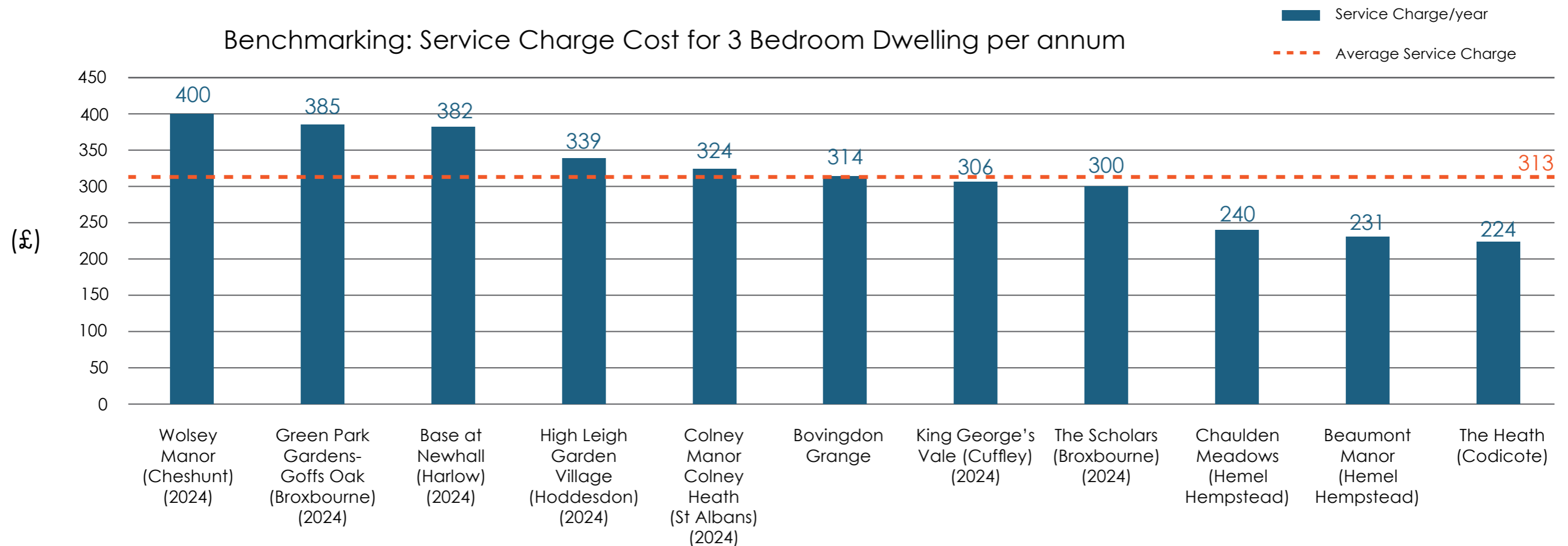


Figure 22 : Benchmarking Resident Service Charges

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.5 Options Analysis

In order to identify the preferred delivery model, four potential delivery model approaches were assessed through the Matrix Criteria evaluation tool, to consider their suitability for delivering stewardship across the HGC Programme Area, in order to identify the preferred delivery model. The approaches are set out in more detail below:

A. Authority Adoption:

The Authority takes ownership and responsibility for all assets and their long-term management and maintenance. This would require alignment between DBC and SADC on a single approach. The Authority would need to consider existing funding issues, likely costs, and how to fund the approach. The Authority is unlikely to be able to fund specialist resource or community placemaking.

B. Independent Management Companies:

These are private companies appointed by landowners/developers to manage assets on an estate-by-estate basis. This could result in an uncoordinated patchwork of independent management companies across the HGC Programme Area

C. Parish Council Adoption:

Existing or new parish councils take on ownership or management of local assets, funded in part by a precept. This would require multiple parishes to be set up in the Growth Areas and would not extend across the Programme Area. A town council approach would not be able to extend across the Programme Area either, unless there were boundary changes at the parish and town council level.

D. HGC Stewardship Hub (developed by Greenbelt and Community Stewardship Solutions):

A Stewardship Hub is a registered charity, set up to own (through freehold, long lease or licence) public open space and community facilities and oversee stewardship and placemaking for any agreed site in a locality, following housing completion. It is established when the planning approval is provided for the first site entering the Hub. The Hub does not take responsibility for the land until completion of construction and transfer of land title. It has transparent and accountable governance, a sustainable financial model and is focused on placemaking by creating strong invested communities.

Each approach was scored and ranked against the Matrix Criteria (Figure 23).

To demonstrate a strong and balanced model that reflects the key aspects of the core standards, the approach should achieve a score of at least 4 against each Matrix Criterion, with a minimum total score of 20.

| Matrix Criteria | Authority Adoption | Independent Management Companies | Parish Council Adoption | Stewardship Hub Model |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| One Place | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Community & Placemaking | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Governance | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Viability | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Model Capabilities | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Total (sum) | 15 | 11 | 14 | 21 |

| Scoring Legend | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 5 | Strong (highest) |
| 4 | Very Good |
| 3 | Moderate |
| 2 | Limited |
| 1 | Poor (lowest) |

Figure 23 : Matrix Criteria - Options Analysis

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy



Figure 24 : HGC Education & Community Sports Provision (Illustrative only)

Options Analysis Conclusion

The results of the Options Analysis indicate that the optimal way to ensure there is a coordinated and aligned approach to the management and maintenance of assets for all the new developments coming through the Local Plans within Hemel Hempstead, is through the HGC Stewardship Hub model. This also allows for the provision of expert advice and has the potential to maximise site uptake with a base model already in place ready for any adaptations required.

Authority adoption has previously been shown to be unviable through high-level cost assessments carried out for the Authorities. This is due to the significant expense of managing and maintaining the large amount of green infrastructure alone within the HGC Growth Areas. In addition, there is uncertainty for local authority governance currently due to the Local Government Reorganisation process. The use of independent management companies, with no governance or accountability to residents on new sites, has been deemed unacceptable through the HGC stakeholder consultation on stewardship.

Although adoption by a parish council can be an attractive option and has proved successful elsewhere, through the establishment of new parish councils, for large-scale development, e.g. Chelmsford Garden Community Parish Council (Essex), the scope of the HGC Programme Area and extent of existing parish councils, makes it extremely challenging to set up a new parish council, or town council that spans across the two districts to cover the whole HGC Programme Area.

3 Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy

3.6 Preferred Delivery Model

Approach

The HGC Stewardship Hub is the preferred delivery model for the Stewardship and Placemaking Strategy, that aligns strongly with the core standards. The Hub will be set up as an independent, not-for-profit charitable organisation that takes legal ownership of public open space and associated community assets, once a development is completed. This would either be after practical completion, or in phases if the site is large and the Hub deems it appropriate.

A managing agent collects an annual 'Stewardship Charge' (equivalent to a service charge) from the residents of each development site, and provides regular reporting and payments to the Hub and carries out site management and maintenance. The Hub monitors performance and quality, and can remove under-performing managing agents, ensuring residents benefit from affordable, well-managed, high-quality environments. This structure ensures transparency, accountability and consistent service standards and was created in response to the concerns raised in the 2024 Competition and Markets Authority Report and the emerging Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024.

Community development and placemaking will be central to the Hub's approach, with one of its principal objectives to build strong, inclusive and resilient communities within each site. It will be governed by a Board of Directors/Trustees with representatives from the community sector and residents, as well as the Authorities, landowners/developers / registered housing providers and professional experts. Neighbourhood Advisory Groups

will be in place at site level, supported by the managing agents. The Board will develop over time and is supported by a small team of permanent staff (typically 3-5 full-time employees) who oversee operations, manage compliance (e.g. SuDS, BNG) and engage with communities to support placemaking and long-term care.

Key Operational Features include:

- A rigorous pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) process will be undertaken to select managing agents to join the Framework, providing surety to residents and Authorities of quality.
- Hubs will be lean, local and accountable to the local community.
- A scalable model, that can grow and adapt, allows the Hub to manage multiple developments and across a geographical area, building a portfolio of land and communities under its care.
- Opportunities for additional revenue generation, such as energy partnerships, hiring out of community buildings and facilities and endowment investment to help offset resident charges over time and provide long-term value for residents.
- A clear exit route for Applicants, removing the need for Authority adoption or resident management companies (RMCs) and avoiding the risks and failures often associated with those models.

Relationship of the HGC Stewardship Hub to Each Individual Site

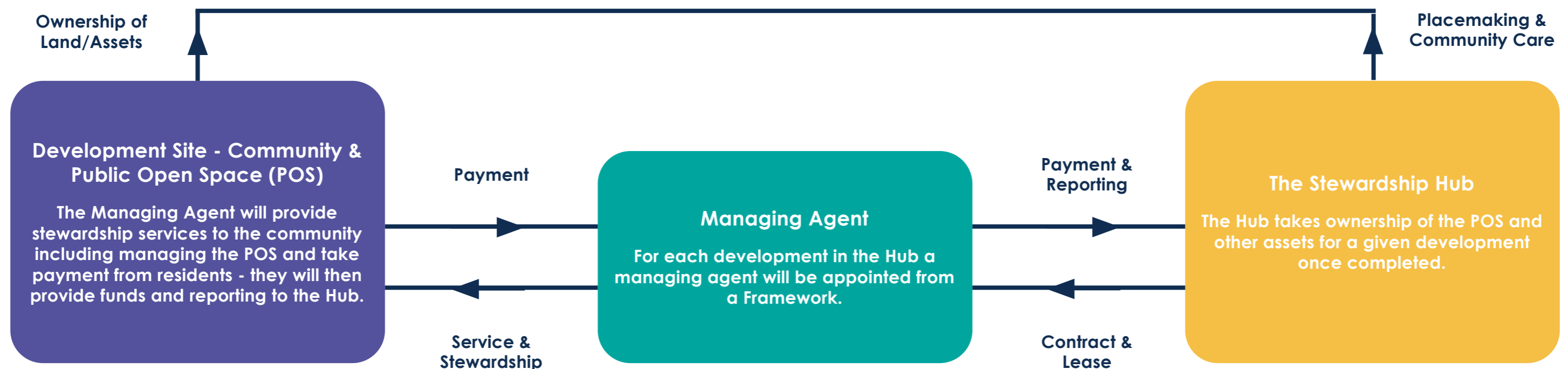


Figure 25 : HGC Stewardship Hub Relationship Diagram



Figure 26 : HGC Country Park (Illustrative only)

The Hub will be funded through a mixed income and charging framework, comprising the following (quoted figures are estimated as at April 2026, and are as a result of findings from a high-level Business Case carried out to support this SPD):

- Developer Seed Funding of £250 per home, supporting early-year incubation and working capital;
- Hub Charge (c £50 per home per annum and included within the Stewardship Charge figure);
- Strategic Amenity Charge and income linked to site-specific strategic assets;
- Income from community facilities and, over time, other low-risk revenue-generating assets.

A one-off initial registration fee for the Applicant to join the Hub is up to £25,000 (index linked from April 2026).

The HGC Stewardship Hub will be established before the first homes and commercial buildings are occupied. This will help ensure that the Stewardship Charge can be collected from new residents and that the necessary management arrangements are in place from the outset. The Stewardship Charge consists of the estate management charge (to cover the cost of day-to-day site management/maintenance e.g. public open space); the Hub charge; and the strategic amenity charge. To ensure it is considered acceptable and affordable for residents, it is benchmarked against comparable local sites

The HGC Stewardship Hub will operate under an agreed Business Plan that will be endorsed by its Start-up Board and Board once fully established. This will provide requirements for both the Applicants and operations of the Hub, and further detail to ensure the smooth running of the Hub and its managing agents, (see further details in Section 6).

See Appendix 2 for Frequently Asked Questions on the Stewardship Hub Model.

4 Delivery

4.1 Implementing the Preferred Delivery Model

The preferred delivery model, the HGC Stewardship Hub, has been scrutinised to provide confidence that it is viable and robust. The model has also been evaluated against other delivery approaches using the Matrix Criteria in Section 3.

Applicants delivering major development sites must address the expectations in Section 4.4.

4.2 Implementing an Alternative Delivery Model

Alternative delivery model options should address all aspects of the Matrix Criteria and core standards in Section 3, to ensure they are aligned.

Guided by the Matrix Criteria, major development sites implementing an alternative model will need to provide the Authorities with details of funding commitments to support assets and community creation, including resourcing and monitoring, community outreach, and any endowment required until full occupation.

The Applicant should provide a full explanation where Matrix Criteria expectations have not been met.

4.3 Additional Delivery Considerations

Where development within the HGC Programme Area is under 75 dwellings, Applicants should contact the HGC Stewardship Hub for further guidance on eligibility. Those that are not eligible are encouraged to consider stewardship solutions that align with the core standards in Section 3.

Where development is over 75 dwellings and situated beyond the HGC Programme Area and within the districts of Dacorum and St Albans, Applicants are encouraged to join the HGC Stewardship Hub.

For these development sites, the Applicant should address all aspects of the Matrix Criteria and core standards in Section 3, to ensure they are aligned. The Applicant should provide a full explanation where Matrix Criteria expectations have not been met.



Figure 27 : Herts IQ (Illustrative Only)

4 Delivery

4.4 Implementing Major Development Sites

This section sets out the stewardship and placemaking guidance for Applicants bringing forward major development sites of 75 dwellings or more (including major windfall sites), within the HGC Programme Area.

The Hub's developer charges, set out in Section 3, will be met by developer contributions to enable the set-up and resourcing of the Hub. Additional developer contributions will support the monitoring of performance and compliance with agreed service standards, service charges and KPIs, for the lifetime of the development.

Major development site Applicants who are opting for the HGC Stewardship Hub must address the Details for Applicant's Submission in Figure 28.

Details for Applicant's Submission

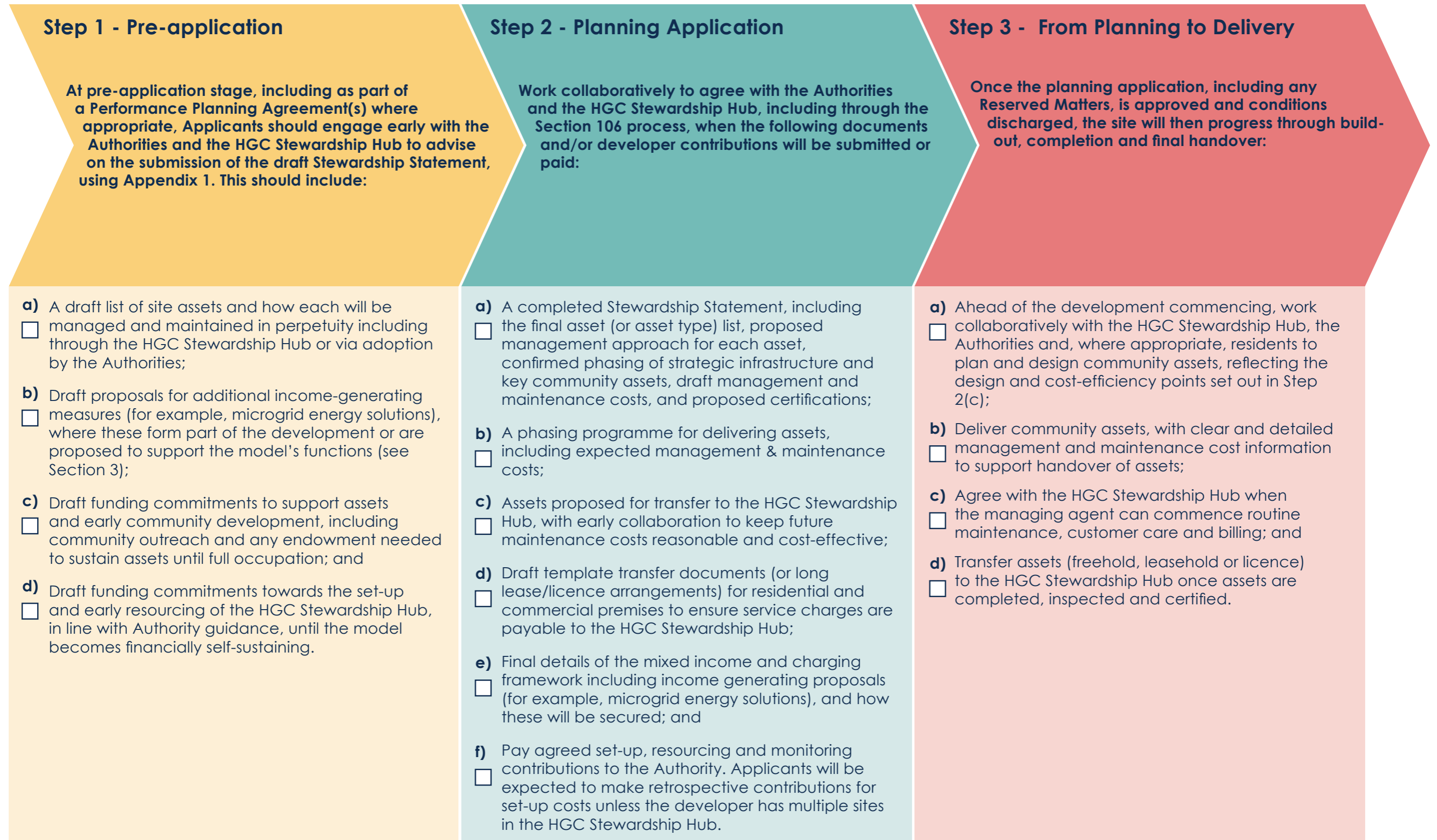
At the earliest opportunity, the Applicant should agree the Stewardship and Placemaking proposal scope with the Authorities and seek advice from the HGC Stewardship Hub. A full stewardship and placemaking proposal should be set out in the Stewardship Statement, Appendix 1. The key aspects that should inform the proposal are as follows:

1. To implement a major development site with the HGC Stewardship Hub the Applicant will follow the sequence of Applicant Steps set out in Section 4.5. and share relevant details to align with the timing of their submission. If you haven't aligned with these steps please discuss further with the Authorities.
2. Provide a comprehensive stewardship proposal that responds to and aligns with the Matrix Criteria.
3. Applicants will be expected to be either under or within the benchmarked affordable service charge range, as a guiding framework, and demonstrate how this will be maintained at this threshold in perpetuity (subject to CPI, and minor unforeseen site costs) to inform the stewardship and placemaking proposal. The service charge will be part of a mixed income and charging framework informed by the guidance in Section 3.4.
4. Include a list of assets and infrastructure that will be placed in the care of the HGC Stewardship Hub, with as much information as possible on each of these assets, for example quantum, asset types and phasing. This will be documented and secured through relevant planning obligations.

Figure 28 : Details for Applicant's Submission

4.5 Applicant Steps

Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow the steps set out below in order to demonstrate compliance with Local Plan policies:



5 Monitoring and Review



Figure 29 : Transformed Town Centre (Illustrative only)

Stewardship monitoring and review requirements, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and performance standards as determined by the Authorities, will be secured through Section 106 (S106) agreements or other appropriate mechanisms.

The provision of stewardship assets will also be secured through S106 agreements or other appropriate mechanisms, in regard to:

- Design and specification (to ensure they are fit for purpose, flexible and adaptable over time);
- Construction and timing of delivery;
- Inspection and certification, to confirm complete to the appropriate standard;
- Maintenance period (as appropriate);
- Transfer of completed assets to the preferred delivery model provider, the HGC Stewardship Hub.

Monitoring and review processes will form a key part of the HGC Stewardship Hub's remit, to ensure high-quality site provision and effective management of on-site services. These processes will support transparency, accountability, and oversight of costs, while maintaining value for money for residents.

KPIs will be set out to enable the key stakeholders (Local Authorities, Hub Board/ Management, Developers and Residents) to have a full understanding of the financial and non-financial performance of all areas of the Stewardship Hub. KPIs will include governance, financial performance, operational performance, customer service, community development and asset management.

6 Further Guidance and Engagement

The adopted SPD will be further supported by an updated HGC Stewardship Hub Business Case (Autumn 2026), before progressing to Hub set-up and Authority sign-off.

A subsequent Business Plan will provide additional clarity on:

- Governance, funding and resourcing arrangements;
- Contract management arrangements;
- The role of the managing agent;
- How different open space types and other assets will be certified; and
- Delivery and performance requirements, including a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) monitoring framework (to be developed by the Local Authorities with support from the Start-up Board).

Key early stages of the HGC Stewardship Hub will include:

- Approving Hub legal documentation
- Hub incorporation as a Company Limited by Guarantee
- Establishing the Start-up Board of Directors and team resource

There will be engagement with developers to provide further insight on the Hub model, particularly funding and resources, along with guidance on the Hub implementation process. Additionally, there will be engagement with staff from the Authorities to provide framing and guidance on the Hub delivery model and induction training.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Any updates on the LGR (summer 2026) will inform the Business Case and Business Plan, as well as governance of the Hub. The HGC Stewardship Hub is expected to be set-up ahead of the conclusion of Local Government Reorganisation. As a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, it will function as an independent body and will not be impacted by the new unitary structure. The Hub Board will reflect any changes to the Authorities following the Reorganisation, with the number of Local Authority representatives adjusted accordingly.



Figure 30 : Housing around HGC Strategic Transport Corridor (Illustrative Only)

Biodiversity Net Gain - An approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was before construction by improving the natural habitat.

Community Assets - Community resources, or services, owned or managed by the HGC Stewardship Hub, including parks, green and open spaces, community buildings and structures that benefit residents and contribute to community wellbeing and may generate income.

Community Data Store Company - An organisation that collects, manages and provides access to data on behalf of a community and delivers social/economic benefits for that community.

Community Development - Community development is the process of supporting the creation of connected, inclusive, and resilient communities through participation, empowerment, local capacity-building, and shared stewardship.

Community Development Officer - A proposed role to support community engagement, integration and placemaking activities working alongside the HGC Stewardship Hub.

Community Engagement Strategy - A plan for involving local residents and stakeholders in the development, management, and stewardship of community assets and neighbourhoods.

Community Forum - A future advisory group evolving from the Stewardship Advisory Group, providing local insight and input into the HGC Stewardship Hub's planning and operations.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - A charge on new development used to fund local infrastructure projects.

Community Interest Company (CIC) - Community Interest Company - A limited company with statutory restrictions to ensure its assets and profits are used primarily for community purposes rather than private gain.

Community Micro-grid Company - An organisation that provides locally generated and managed energy to a community, through a small-scale, independent network.

Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status - A type of non-profit legal structure commonly used in the UK for charities, community organisations, trusts, and stewardship bodies.

Consumer Prices Index (CPI) - The UK's main measure of inflation, published monthly by the Office for National Statistics.

Endowment - A financial contribution, or a commercial asset, from developers to support the long-term sustainability of stewardship activities.

Energy Services Company (ESCo) - A business that helps organisations or property owners reduce energy use, lower energy costs, and improve the performance of buildings and infrastructure.

Garden City Principles - A set of planning and development principles promoting sustainable, inclusive and well-managed communities, as advocated by the Town and Country Planning Association.

Governance - The formal framework by which the HGC Stewardship Hub will be directed and controlled.

Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Programme - An ambitious, strategic growth programme, aiming to transform Hemel Hempstead and wider routes by delivering new sustainable neighbourhoods, infrastructure jobs and community assets, through to 2050.

Herts IQ - A designated enterprise zone within the Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area focused on environmental technologies and innovation and part of the wider commercial context.

HGC Growth Areas - Sites north and east of Hemel Hempstead identified for significant new housing and infrastructure development as part of the HGC Programme.

HGC Programme Area - The HGC Programme Area covers the town of Hemel Hempstead, within the borough of Dacorum, as well as the proposed Growth Areas, straddling both Dacorum and St Albans district to the north and east of the town and wider movement routes beyond. (Page 6 includes further details about the geographic scope).

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) - The restructuring of local councils from a two tier system into larger unitary authorities, to simplify governance, improve efficiency and deliver services more effectively.

Local Plan - A statutory document prepared by local planning authorities outlining land use policies and development allocations.

Major Development - is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plans as development over 10 dwellings. For the purpose of this SPD and the preferred delivery model, major development is development over 75 dwellings.

Managing Agent - A company/organisation appointed by the Stewardship Hub to oversee management and maintenance of public open space and agreed community assets on a development site.

Managing Agent Framework: A Hub approved list from which developers must procure managing agents for on-site maintenance, to ensure accountability and transparency.

Mixed Income and Charging Model - A financial approach combining multiple income sources (e.g. service charges, rents, commercial income, endowments, grants, sponsorship) to ensure sustainability and affordability of the stewardship and placemaking approach.

Monitoring and Review Strategy - A framework to assess stewardship delivery progress using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and performance standards, facilitating continuous improvement.

Monitoring Officer - A proposed role to oversee compliance with stewardship and placemaking obligations and performance indicators.

Placemaking - Placemaking, in connection to Stewardship, is about creating strong communities who are invested in the place where they live by playing a meaningful role in design and decision-making, through community development and empowerment.

Preferred Delivery Model - The Stewardship and Placemaking approach that has been identified as best suited to the HGC Programme Area.

Section 106 Agreement (S106) - A legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, used to secure developer contributions for infrastructure and community benefits.

Spatial Vision - A strategic framework outlining the intended development pattern, placemaking, and stewardship approach for the HGC Programme Area.

Stakeholder Engagement - Consultation and collaboration with key partners, residents, landowners/developers, local authorities, and community organisations, to shape stewardship and placemaking.

Start-up Board - A transitional governance body formed to guide the establishment of the HGC Stewardship Hub, including representatives from the Authorities, landowners/developers, stakeholders and residents.

Stewardship - The long-term management, maintenance and governance of community assets, ensuring sustainability, inclusivity and community involvement.

Stewardship Advisory Group - A forum of local community and business representatives providing insight, support, and guidance on stewardship and placemaking. It will help support the Start-up Board for the HGC Stewardship Hub and evolve into the Community Forum once Hub is established.

Stewardship Hub - A Stewardship Hub is a not-for-profit, charitable organisation that will own (through freehold, long lease or licence) public open space and community facilities and oversee stewardship and placemaking for any agreed site in a locality, following housing completion.

Stewardship Statement - A document submitted by developers detailing the list of agreed community assets for the development site, along with long-term management and maintenance provision and funding mechanisms.

Strategic Sites - in the HGC Programme Area are set out on page 8 and relate to Hm11 and Hm13.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) - Green spaces provided to mitigate the impact of development on protected natural areas.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - A document that provides additional guidance to support policies in the Local Plan, in this case focusing on Stewardship and Placemaking.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - Drainage solutions that manage rainfall and surface water in a more natural way such as ponds or permeable paving.

Swale - Shallow, sloping green channel that collects rainwater on development sites.

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) - An organisation promoting sustainable planning and the Garden City model.

Umbrella Stewardship Body - A single, overarching approach to the long-term management and maintenance of community assets and infrastructure across the HGC Programme Area.

Windfall Sites - Sites that become available for development unexpectedly, that were not specifically identified as available in the Local Plan.

CIC - Community Interest Company

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy

CPI - Consumer Price Index

DBC - Dacorum Borough Council

ESCo - Energy Services Company

EV - Electric Vehicle

HGC - Hemel Garden Communities

LAP - Local Area for Play

LEAP - Local Equipped Area for Play

NEAP - Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play

S106 - Section 106

SADC - St Albans City and District Council

SANG - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

SPD - Supplementary Planning Document

SuDS - Sustainable Drainage Systems

TCPA - Town and Country Planning Association



Stewardship Statement Template

Section 1: How to complete the Stewardship Statement

The Stewardship Statement, and supporting documents, will provide the Authorities and Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Stewardship Hub with a full summary of the Applicant's Stewardship & Placemaking proposal for their site. It refers to key guidance from Section 4, including *Figure 28: Details for Applicant's Submission* which is set out below and should be addressed.

Details for Applicant's Submission (Section 4.4, Figure 28)

At the earliest opportunity, the Applicant should agree the Stewardship and Placemaking proposal scope with the Authorities and seek advice from the HGC Stewardship Hub. Please visit the HGC Website to download the Stewardship Statement Template in an editable format. The key aspects that should inform the proposal are as follows:

1. To implement a major development site with the HGC Stewardship Hub the Applicant will follow the sequence of Applicant Steps set out in Section 4.5. and share relevant details to align with the timing of their submission. If you haven't aligned with these steps please discuss further with the Authorities.
2. Provide a comprehensive stewardship proposal that responds to and aligns with the Matrix Criteria.
3. Applicants will be expected to be either under or within the benchmarked affordable service charge range, as a guiding framework, and demonstrate how this will be maintained at this threshold in perpetuity (subject to CPI, and minor unforeseen site costs) to inform the stewardship and placemaking proposal. The service charge will be part of a mixed income and charging framework informed by the guidance in Section 3.4.
4. Include a list of assets and infrastructure that will be placed in the care of the HGC Stewardship Hub, with as much information as possible on each of these assets, for example quantum, asset types and phasing. This will be documented and secured through relevant planning obligations.

Section 2: Development Site Information
(to be completed by Developer)

| | |
|---|--|
| Developer Name: | |
| Development Name / Site Reference: | |
| Contact Name & Role: | |
| Contact Email: | |
| Contact Phone Number: | |
| Date form completed: | |

Section 3: Asset Identification & Management

(to be completed by Developer)

Please list and describe all identified assets within the development site.

(E.g. public open spaces, play areas, SuDS, community buildings, highways, etc.)

| Asset Type | Quantum | Adopted by? | Stewardship Hub involvement? | Estimated cost of management/maintenance | Phasing Details |
|------------|---------|-------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Section 4: Income-Generating Proposals

(to be completed by Developer)

Please detail any embedded or proposed income-generating initiatives (e.g. microgrid, solar farms, rental spaces, etc.):

How do these proposals support the Stewardship Hub's activities?

Section 5: Funding Commitments

(to be completed by Developer)

Please explain in detail, *in a separate document*, your stewardship proposal, setting out your:

- Funding commitments and timing to support the assets and community creation, including funding for community outreach (including endowment to sustain assets until 100% occupation).
- Viability reasoning for the development's mixed income and charging framework, explaining how the income and income generating initiatives, funding commitments, and expected costs will sustain the assets, and maintain an affordable service charge.
- Funding for the set-up, resourcing and monitoring of the Stewardship Hub
- Expected long-term management/maintenance costs for the assets including phasing of their delivery and handover timescales

Additional Comments or Notes:

Section 6: Supporting Documents:
(to be completed by Developer)

Please list any supporting documents you are attaching such as, plans, cost breakdowns, or phasing schedules with this form submission:

Applicants should submit the Draft Stewardship Statement with their planning application.

Appendix 2: Stewardship Hub Model Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Stewardship Hub?

A Stewardship Hub is an independent, not-for-profit charitable organisation, established to take long-term responsibility for the management and maintenance of community assets on new developments. These may include public open space, parks and play areas, SANG, community buildings, sport pitches and other community facilities and infrastructure.

The HGC Stewardship Hub will oversee the management and maintenance of community assets in new housing developments across the HGC Programme Area.

How does the Stewardship Hub operate?

The Stewardship Hub takes on the ownership (through freehold, long lease or licence) of public open space and community facilities for any agreed site in a locality, following housing completion. It is established when the planning approval is provided for the first site entering the Hub. The Hub does not take responsibility for the land until completion of construction and transfer of land title.

It has transparent and accountable governance, a sustainable financial model and is focused on placemaking through creating strong invested communities. The Hub requires multiple development sites to operate economies of scale and provide a viable solution.

Who manages and maintains the on-site open space?

The developer will appoint a managing agent from a pre-approved Stewardship Hub framework. This enables the Hub to secure an approved management agent, committed to providing a high-quality and value for money service for residents and who is aware of stewardship arrangements. On completion, assets transfer to the Hub, which leases them to the managing agent who will be responsible for delivering day-to-day services such as landscaping and maintenance. The managing agent collects the service charges and provides regular performance and financial reports to the Hub, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Is there a minimum site size?

The Hub works best for sites of 75 dwellings and above. Sites below 75 dwellings could be considered, subject to discussion with the Hub and Authorities.

Would the use of the Hub be mandatory?

The Hub is not a mandatory approach, but it is the preferred delivery model for Stewardship and Placemaking for sites of 75 dwellings and above within the HGC Programme Area and is guided by a set of criteria and core standards set out in Section 3 of the SPD. Applicants who wish to undertake an alternative approach to the Stewardship Hub should address all aspects of the criteria and core standards in Section 3 to ensure that they are aligned.

Why is the Stewardship Hub model recommended?

The Stewardship Hub Model offers a structured, professional and sustainable approach to managing community assets and public open space. It responds to concerns raised in the Competition and Markets Authority Report (CMA) (2024) in relation to many estate management companies on new sites charging high costs for poor service. The Hub provides:

- Professional Governance – the Hub is overseen by a Board of Directors/Trustees with relevant expertise. Decisions are made in the public interest and with long-term sustainability in mind.
- Financial Sustainability – the model is funded in perpetuity which provides financial security.
- Placemaking and community development – a key objective of the Hub is to build inclusive, integrated and resilient communities who are invested in the place.
- Community Accountability – residents are represented within the Hub's governance structure and managing agents are held to clear service standards. This improves transparency, responsiveness and trust.
- Consistency Across Sites – the Hub can manage multiple developments across the HGC Programme Area, creating economies of scale and consistent service delivery.
- Support for Placemaking and Biodiversity – stewardship also works to enhance biodiversity, support community initiatives and maintain spaces that contribute to wellbeing and social value.
- Reduced Risk for Authorities and Developers – the Hub provides a clear and clean exit route for developers. It also avoids the risks associated with inadequate Management Companies, as highlighted by the CMA in its 2024 report.

Image Credits

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 24, 26, 27, 29 & 30 - Illustrations produced for HGC by DK-CM

Figure 5 - Produced for HGC by BPTW, HGC Team

Figure 16 - Community Stewardship Solutions

All other figures were produced or supplied by the HGC Team

